

AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
PROPER LESSONS,

Appointed by the LITURGY of the
CHURCH of *ENGLAND*,
To be Read on SUNDAYS, and Chief FESTIVALS,
throughout the Year,
As they are directed by her Table of PROPER LESSONS.

To which are prefixed,
P R E F A C E S,
Pointing out the Design of the respective LESSONS.

Together with
Such REFLECTIONS on the several Passages contained
therein, as may serve to enforce the Duties and Doctrines
propounded to our Faith and Practice.

AND ALSO
Some EXPLANATORY NOTES.

The WHOLE
Intended for assisting the Judgment and Devotion of the serious
Members of our Church in Hearing and Reading the said Lessons.

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Late of EALING in Middlesex.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE SECOND EDITION.

He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. Rev. iii. 22.

Hear the Church. Matt. xviii. 17.

To the Law, and to the Prophets. Isa. viii. 20.

L O N D O N:

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A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
P R O P E R L E S S O N S.

*The Sunday called SEPTUAGESIMA; or,
The Third Sunday before LENT.*

P R E F A C E.

THE reason why this Sunday is called Septuagesima, the next Sexagesima, and the following Quinquagesima, seems to be, as Bishop Sparrow observes, from the mere sequence of numbering; because the First Sunday in Lent is called Quadragesima, as being about forty days before Easter; therefore the Sunday before that, being still farther from Easter, came to be called Quinquagesima, or fiftieth, fifty being the next decimal number above forty: and so, for the same reason, the Sunday before that is stiled Sexagesima; and the Sunday before that, being this Sunday, is called Septuagesima.

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But be this as it will, the humble Christian cavils not at the names, by which the church hath thought fit to stile these Sundays: He conceives it of far greater use, and more worthy his attention, to consider them as preparatives^a to the Lenten Fast; that so, when it comes, it may be the more strictly and religiously observed.

On this then, and the two ensuing Sundays, she calls upon all of us to prepare ourselves for the exercise of repentance and mortification, during the season of LENT: And that we may the more effectually do this, she not only stirs us up by her Epistles and Gospels, to discipline ourselves for the race that is set before us, where all that run are sure to obtain the prize; but, in her proper lessons, she more particularly points out the first principles, on which it is absolutely necessary to ground our penitential exercises, in order to make our repentance the more perfect: And we may truly add, that her subsequent lessons, throughout the whole season of Lent, are so wisely and so very properly chosen, as to contain the best and most complete system of repentance, that hath ever yet been published to the world.

Now the main points, and most necessary to be known, as preparatory to a true repentance, are these three:

First, The knowledge of GOD, and of ourselves:—What GOD is in himself; and what he is to us:—What we were, when first created; how formed indeed out of the dust of the ground, yet animated with a living and rational soul; made in the very image and likeness of God, perfect, upright, and holy.—And these things we are taught in our two proper lessons for this day.

^a *Preparatives, &c.] In concilio Altiſiodorenſi, Can. 2. Statutum fuit, ut Paſtores Eccleſiarum, ſtatim poſt Epiphaniam mitterent nuncios ad omnes Eccleſias, qui prænunciarent venturam Quadrageſimam, ut ſe pararent ad Jejunium; unde credibile eſt reliſtam nobis eſſe Septuageſimam, Sexageſimam, et Quinquageſimam; in quibus Eccleſia futurum Jejunium annunciat. Nichols Addit. Notes on the the Liturgy p. 30.*

And this method of giving notice of the approaching Lent was then uſed, as we may preſume, becauſe the tables and kalendars (ſuch as we now have) for ſhewing the moveable faſts and feaſts of the church, were not then framed.

Secondly,

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Secondly, The knowledge of the nature of sin, and how it first came into the world; the guilt and shame, the punishment, and fatal effects, inseparably annexed thereto; but withal, to know what is the remedy of it, and what the means of grace whereby pardon may be obtained.—All this is set before us in the two proper lessons for Sunday next.

The Third head, are the qualifications requisite on our part for procuring reconciliation with God, and making our repentance effectual.—And this is taught us in the first lessons for the Quinquagesima Sunday.

Or more briefly thus:

It appears to be the church's design, in these three preparatory Sundays, to instruct us in the necessary preliminaries to the discipline and exercise of true repentance; which are these three;

First, WHY we are to repent:

Secondly, WHAT we are to repent of:

Thirdly, How we ought to repent, in order to obtain the remission of our sins.

This first Sunday therefore, in the first and second chapters of Genesis (wherein the creation of the world out of nothing is related to us; the original and happiness of mankind described; and God, the Creator of all things, exhibited to us as the author of all we have, and all we are), doth most strongly enforce the reason WHY we ought to repent.—And indeed, the reason is no other than what the apostle St. Paul urges, and what gratitude, and the moral fitness of things, ought to inspire us with; namely, That the consideration of such riches of Divine goodness, which were at first heaped upon us, “should lead us to “repentance”.

⁂ Romans ii. 4.

*The Sunday called SEPTUAGESIMA; or,
The Third Sunday before LENT.*

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS Chap. i.

1. *IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

IN the beginning;] that is to say, when time and matter first began; GOD, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons, but one God, *created*, out of nothing, *the heaven and the earth*, with all things therein, both visible and invisible: *Created* them by the SON, or Second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, as the instrumental cause; so that "Without him, nothing was made that was made^c."

2. *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

First, God created matter, or the materials and elements, out of which the several species of all created substance were to be framed: So that this terraqueous globe (here stiled *earth*, and generally so called, tho' consisting of water and earth) was at first a chaos, *without form, and void*. It was not yet disposed into that beautiful form, nor furnished with those creatures which it now hath. An universal *darkness* covered the surface of the vast and formless abyfs, until the SPIRIT of God, the Third Person in the holy and undivided Trinity, whose peculiar office it is to give life^d and perfection, *moving*, and as it were brood-

^c John i. 3.

^d *To give life.]* The peculiar title given to the Holy Ghost in the Nicene creed is, giver of life [*τὸν Κόσμον ἡ ζωοποιός.*]

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ing^e, upon the *waters*, did, by his divine energy, communicate a principle of life and motion, to the imperfect and torpid mass of first matter, that so it might not only be reduced into a most exquisite form and order, but receive a virtue to produce all the several species of creatures, both vegetable and animal, which are now the life and beauty of this habitable world.

3. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

The next act of almighty power and wisdom, towards disposing the rude and undigested chaos into form and order, was, to illuminate the whole face of it in a moment, or instant of time: And this he did by his Word; by the Divine *Logos* God "commanded the light to shine out of darkness^f;" creating a glorious body of light out of its contrary, darkness; as he had produced substance or matter out of its contrary, non-entity, or an absolute nothing.

4. *And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

Light, being the first of all material substances that was made perfect at once, is therefore, by its almighty author, pronounced *good*. This, as yet, could not so properly be said of the earth, while dark, formless, and void: But in the further process of the creation, as the several works of God were completed and finished by his hand, they likewise are declared to be *good*; good, both in their kinds, and as perfectly suited to those

* *Brooding.*] So the *Hebrew* word, which we render *moving*, doth properly signify; alluding to the sitting of an hen upon her eggs to hatch them. This probably gave occasion to that opinion of some of the antient heathens, that the production of all things was from an egg. See the Bishop of *Clogher's Chronol.* in his introduction, and the verses he cites from *Aristophanes*. See this Note more at large, on the Proper Lesson for *Trinity Sunday*.

^f 2 Cor. iv. 6.

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ends for which they were designed.—As therefore we may hence learn, that they were not the effects of a blind and fortuitous chance, but the deliberate acts of infinite power and wisdom, each finished piece answering to that archetypal pattern and idea in the Divine mind, according to which they were formed; and exactly adapted to the uses, for which they were designed; so are they most admirably contrived to set forth the praises and perfections of Him that made them. “The heavens declare the glory of God^g.” —Yea, “all thy works shall praise thee, O Lord^h.” —It is also an admonition to us, not only to do good works such as God and our conscience may approve, and pronounce to be *good*; but likewise, that we ought every day, when our business is over, and our work done, to take a review of our actions, and examine the nature of them; that so, if they have been *good*, we may give God the glory; if evil, we may repent, and amend.

Moreover, by God’s dividing the *light* from the *darkness*, and establishing an unalterable distinction between the one and the other, we are taught the essential and eternal difference there is between moral good and evil; the one of which is often called, in his word, by the name of *light*; the other, by that of *darkness*.—“In thy light shall we see lightⁱ.” But ill men are said to walk on still in darkness; “That they love darkness, and hate the light, because their deeds are evil^k.”—Again; light is the creature of God, but darkness is not so; it being nothing else but the absence of light, and consequently hath no real existence. In like manner, sin is none of God’s creature; but the absence and privation of virtue and goodness: It has therefore no positive being, but is rather a defect of being, and therefore evil; for which reason, “He that pursueth evil, is

^g Psalm xix.
^k John iii. 19.

^h Ps. cxlv.

ⁱ Ps. xxxvi. 9.

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“ said to pursue it to his own death ¹;” that is to say, to the loss and destruction of his own being.

5. *And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night; and the evening and the morning were the first day.*

What God therefore hath so divided, and essentially put asunder, let no man presume to join and compound together.—Good and evil can no more consist with each other, than light and darkness; much less interchange their nature. “Wo-
“ therefore to them (as the prophet speaks ^m) who
“ call that evil, which God has pronounced *good*;
“ who invert the established order of his will and
“ works, and put darkness for light, and light for
“ darkness;” yea, in downright contradiction to
God himself, as well as to common sense and ex-
perience, pronounce private vices to be public be-
nefits.

Light in God is eternal and coeval with himself; for where he is, there must be light: He is light it-
self, and the father of lights; “and in him is no
“ darkness at all ⁿ.” But, with respect to us, our
light at best is but alternate; our day and our night
succeeding each other, by a continual interchange of
light and darkness: Nay, by nature, we are all like
the rude and undigested chaos, dark, formless, and
void; till the Spirit of God *move on the face of the
deep*, and his Word say, *Let there be light*.—So that,
as the natural day, in this first reckoning of time,
commenced from the *evening*, so does our day of
grace: *The evening and [then] the morning is our first
day*. This was the order of our new birth; this the
date of our spiritual life in baptism; and should ad-
monish us, as of our original out of darkness, out
of nothing, thereby to mortify and humble our pride;
so ought it to remind us of our duty, to walk as
children of light, and of the day.

¹ *Prov.* xi. 19.

^m *Isa.* v.

ⁿ *1 John* i. 5.

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This production of light out of darkness, and the law given it of setting the first date of time, and establishing a regular succession of *day* and *night*, was the glorious and admirable work of the *first day*, answering to, and most aptly prefiguring our *Sunday*;—the first day of the week, as first of the creation: First also of the Christian æra; our Lord arising from the dark regions of hell and the grave on this blessed day, as did the light out of darkness, “to give shine into the world.”

6. *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*

7. *And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.*

8. *And God called the firmament Heaven: and the evening and the morning were the second day.*

God, having, as before observed, provided fit materials for erecting this noble frame of the universe, proceeds, like a wise master-builder, to arrange them in their proper order. First, he disposes the four elements (the eldest birth of nature's womb, as one rightly styles them^p); and assigns them their respective regions and offices.—On the first day he had called forth the element of fire^q, which most probably was that light that then emerged out of the

chaos, to enlighten the new world, by a revolution of day and night, until the sun and moon were made, to perform that office.—On the *second day* (which answers to our *Monday*) he proceeds to distribute the other elements, according to their several uses, and most natural order.—To the air, which is next in nature and gravity to fire, he assigns the atmosphere, or region next above the earth, wherein the *fowls fly*, as it is expounded afterwards, ver. 20.—The *waters* he divides into two bodies, part *under*, and part *above*

^o So Milton.
end of the Lesson.

^p Milton.

^q See Annotation at the

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the firmament, or aerial heaven; the main bulk of the heavier fluids sinking, by their weight, towards the centre, or subsiding on the earth; while the lighter parts were exhaled, and suspended above, at some distance from the earth, in clouds or vapours; so that there remained, between the clouds above, and waters below, a free, constant, and open space, stretched, as it were, and expanded, over the surface of the earth, and here called *firmament*, or air; which, tho' soft, and lighter in nature and substance than water, is, by the almighty power, and infinite wisdom, of the Creator, made a perpetual barrier and boundary between the waters above, and the waters below.—What human understanding can conceive or explain the admirable contrivance of this distribution of air and water, this wonderful “balancing of the clouds,” this “binding up the waters in the thick cloud, and “the cloud is not rent under them^a!”—What words can express the manifold uses of these elements so disposed! What devotion sufficiently praise the power, the goodness, the providence, of the all-wise disposer!

9. *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.*

10. *And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas: and God saw that it was good.*

11. *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit*

The work of the *third day*, which corresponds to our *Tuesday*, was, first, to assign the two remaining elements, of *earth* and *water*, their respective stations; and then compose thereof this terraqueous globe, and make it fit for its inhabitants.—The Divine Word (who is the very law of nature) giving the *waters* their fluidity, they gathered themselves into those chanel and receptacles, which God had pre-

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after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth; and it was so.

12. *And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

13. *And the evening and the morning were the third day.*

both *sea* and *land*, as to serve to the delight, as well as benefit and accommodation of man.—“ O that man would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he hath done for the children of men!”

Secondly, No sooner had the main body of waters retired from the higher parts of the earth, and the soil was so drained by the immediate power of God (possibly by the diurnal revolution of the light, or element of fire, round the globe, as by an instrumental warmth; for the sun was not yet made) as to merit from God the name of *dry land*, but the great Creator clothed it with a most beautiful drapery of *grass*, and *herbs*, and *trees*.—“ He brought forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men; that he might bring food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and bread to strengthen man’s heart, &c.”—Twice doth God, on this day, survey his works, and twice pronounces them *good*; first, the *earth* and *sea*; then the plants and product of the earth; to teach us, who are so apt to complain of the evils and miseries of this world, even while we set our hearts too much

upon it, that these evils do not proceed from any defect or evil in the creature; consequently, not from the use, much less from the author of them (for here we see both the earth and the sea, with all the fruits of the earth, are pronounced *good*), but from their abuse, and our own folly, and irregular appetites:—In a word, that moral, and not natural evil, is the only source of all our miseries.—But withal, the remedy for those evils, which our sins occasion, is also suggested to us, in the process of this day's work. The *waters* which covered the face of the earth, and impregnated its fertile womb, thro' the energy of the Divine Spirit moving thereon, verse 2. represent to us the laver of regeneration, even the waters of baptism and repentance.—Yea, the congregating of the waters, at the sound of God's voice, *unto one place*, exemplify as it were the catholic church, and the unity of faith*.—And doth not the exuberant fruitfulness of the earth, which immediately followed that plenteous irrigation, and its bringing forth all sorts of plants, and vegetable productions, set us a lively pattern of obedience, and good works?—And did we realize this emblem, and reduce it into practice, we should find, that all the works of God are still, as he pronounced them, *good*; and nothing evil in the world but sin.

“ O thou, who on this day madest the *dry land* to appear, first, grant us a flood of penitential tears;
 “ then, dry them up with the beams of thy mercy,
 “ and the comfort of thy word.—O thou, who on this day createdst all kinds of *seed*, sow in our hearts the incorruptible seed of thy word, that we may be renewed to a lively hope.—O thou, that on this day formedst all kinds of fruitful *trees*, make us, like good trees, to bring forth good fruit here, that we may hereafter partake of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God†.”

* So St. Ambrose.

† Featley's Devotions.

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14. *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.*

15. *And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so.*

16. *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also.*

17. *And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth;*

18. *And to rule over the day, and over the night; and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.*

19. *And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

On *Wednesday* the *fourth* day, the great luminaries of heaven were lighted up.— That light, which on the first day was commanded to shine out of darkness, and had hitherto supplied the office of the sun, is now collected, by the same almighty hand, into those luminous bodies, the sun, the moon, the stars, which adorn the face of the heavens, and *give light upon the earth.*—

Many and admirable are the reflections, which philosophy suggests on the magnitude, the motions, the aspects, the uses and influences, of these heavenly orbs and constellations: many and glorious are the mysteries, which the eye of faith contemplates herein: many and excellent the instructions, which reason and religion discover in the order and procedure of the divine workmanship on this *fourth day.*—And who, that has any faith, or even

eyes to behold these wondrous works of the almighty Creator, can forbear crying out with an holy astonishment, with an ecstasy of praise, “The day is thine, “ the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light “ and the sun: O Lord God of hosts, who is like “ unto thee!”—But the humble penitent, who, at this time, is called upon by the church to prepare for the discipline of repentance and mortification, fearing so much as to lift up his eyes to heaven (whose

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whose sweet and beneficent lights upbraid his works of darkness, and extreme ingratitude), smites on his breast, and cries out with a just abhorrence of himself, and his unworthiness, "Lord, what is man, that
 " thou art mindful of him ; or the son of man, that
 " thou so regardest him ?"—" If I look on the earth,
 " thou hast made every part to serve him : Her sur-
 " face to sustain him, her flowers to refresh him, her
 " herbs to cure him, her fruits to nourish him, her
 " mines to enrich him, her precious stones to adorn
 " him ; thou hast made the waters to wash and to
 " cool him ; the air to breathe in ; the fire to warm,
 " to comfort, and to light him.—When I look up to
 " heaven, I see there new scenes of wonder, new
 " proofs of divine goodness towards man ; the ra-
 " diant sun, and silver moon, not only as glorious
 " lamps to light him, the one by day, the other by
 " night ; but to measure his time, to direct his
 " husbandry, to recreate him in his travels, to ripen
 " his fruits, and to increase his store.—Above all,
 " these glorious lights in the firmament represent
 " to us the far more glorious gifts of heavenly light.
 " This *sun* daily exhibits to us a lively emblem of
 " the Sun of righteousness ; his setting, and his rising
 " with healing in his wings ; his death and resur-
 " rection. This *moon*, with her borrowed beams,
 " sets forth the Church, that lesser light, which rules
 " our night of life, not by her own beams, but by
 " the light which she receives from Christ ".—And
 what love, what service, ought not man to repay to
 God, for all these benefits he continually receives !
 —Yet what return do we make, but a continual in-
 gratitude and disobedience !

As there are four kinds of
 20. *And God said, Let* life, the Vegetable, Animal,
the waters bring forth abun- Rational, and Divine, we
dantly, the moving creature have had, in the relation of
that bath life, and fowl that the third day's work (verse

" Archbishop of Cambray.

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may fly above the earth, in the open firmament of heaven.

21. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the fowls multiply in the earth.

23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

kind, partly of one nature, and partly of the other): And afterwards *beasts*, which are the third sort of animals, and were created on the sixth day. The two first, as formed out of the *waters*, have a kind of affinity in their manner and organs of motion. The last, as made of the *earth*, as man was, have a greater affinity with the animal part of man. We may likewise observe, that these three kinds of animals have three stations, or spheres of motion, assigned them; the element of water for the *fish*, the air for the fowls, and the earth for *beasts*. This threefold system of animal creatures God not only made, and, on a survey of his work, pronounced them *good*, after their several kinds, but *blessed them* also with a faculty of propagation, to preserve and continue their respective species by generation.—“First he approves, “and then he blesses.”—So may we also expect the like approbation, and the like blessing, if so be, in

11, &c.), an account of the production of vegetables, as *grasses, herbs and trees*:—these were out of the earth.—In the history of this day’s work (being *Thursday*, and the *fifth day* of the creation) we are informed how the animal life was first produced out of the *waters*. Let the *waters bring forth* (as out of a fertile womb, or first principle) *abundantly, &c.*—Now of animals, or, as they are here called, *moving creatures that have life*, we find three sorts, two of which are here mentioned, *fish* and *fowls* (in both which must be included those of the amphibious

our new creation, our new birth unto righteousness, we follow the plan of this day's work; that is to say, if we receive the first principle of our new life in the waters of baptism, and then, with the winged kind, mount up and ascend towards heaven.—The animal life alone will not carry us thitherward: Without the wings that *David* wished for^x, we shall still remain in the waters as mute fishes, to be taken in an evil net; or as the brute beasts lie prone and groveling on the earth, devouring one another, or made to be destroyed^y.

24. *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*

25. *And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

Beasts and cattle are the third kind of the animal species, as we observed before. These are now created on the *sixth day*, or *Friday*, produced out of the earth, according to their several kinds, both wild and tame; with all the innumerable train of the reptile species. The use, that we may draw from hence for our instruction, against the ensuing penitential season, is, to consider ourselves (according to that noted description

of man) as a microcosm, or little world: Our *earth*, or earthly part, the body (since we lost our heavenly similitude), abounds with every kind of brute animals. If some are tame, others, and those in far the greater number, are savage, wild, and untractable. Man, considered only in his animal and carnal state, is a mere collection of every kind of beast: Not to mention, that the appetites and passions are the same in man, as they are in brutes: What is the heart, but a very den of lions, bears, wolves, dogs, and

^x *Psal. lv.*

^y *2 Pet. ii. 12.*

foxes, &c.?—The memory swarms with innumerable reptiles, vipers, serpents, muckworms; with flies also of a thousand kinds, buzzing and idly sporting in the scene of fancy. For what else are all our vain ungoverned thoughts?—Our understanding is crouded with moles, bats, dormice, &c. beasts, that have no sight, or use it not. For what else are all our blind or perverse opinions, which cannot, or will not, see the light of truth?—Did we but in earnest, and with a serious introversion, turn in our eyes upon this true and real state of our inner man, how should we most heartily abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes!—Nothing but repentance can expel these unclean beasts, that harbour within us, and cleanse this *Augean* stable of all its filth and dung. Nor should we think it much, to apply the whole ensuing season of LENT to so useful, so necessary a work.

26. *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

27. *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.*

28. *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea,*

The third kind of life is the rational. And as body, or matter, is the subject wherein the vegetable and animal lives exist; the soul only, or spiritual substance, is capable of reason, and the only seat of the rational life.—This life then was given to man, as he was endowed with a soul, or immaterial spirit, infused by the breath of God into his material and bodily frame: Man's nature, therefore, is a wonderful compound of matter and spirit; the first he received from the earth, being framed out of the ground, in common with, and on the same day with the brutal kind; partaking with them in

and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing, that moveth upon the earth.

in all the acts of the sensitive and animal life. His other part, the soul, wherein resides reason, was by God inspired into, and united to his body. And this prerogative of reason, which is an heavenly principle, we may say is the first impression of that divine *image*, which God was pleased to stamp upon man. And herein more particularly man resembles the SON of God, who is the *Logos*, or REASON itself; who is also called the "express image of God^a;" and who, that he might be the more like unto us, took afterwards our nature upon him, and was made man.

The second mode of resemblance, whereby man bears a *likeness* to God, is the very frame of his nature, which is a real Trinity in unity, as the Divine Nature is. For the nature of man, as St. Paul's infallible philosophy instructs us, consists of three distinct properties, SOUL, BODY, and SPIRIT^b; and these three modes of existence agreeing in one, and constituting but one thing, one essence or nature, in imitation of the Divine subsistence in three persons, is the nearest *image* in all created beings, to the triune uncreated essence of the Deity, that is to say, of the Godhead itself.

The third mode of resemblance, whereby man bears the *image* of God, is that *dominion*, which he hath given us over the works of his hands. This is the *likeness* and similitude of his power, wherein man more particularly resembles GOD the FATHER.

A fourth manner of our resemblance to God is that righteousness and true holiness, in which we were first created, and whereon our immortality and happiness depended. In this consisted, more peculiarly, our likeness to the HOLY SPIRIT; and from hence was derived that fourth kind of life which

^a Heb. i. 3.

^b 1 Thess. v.

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we have called the spiritual and divine. But of this life we shall have occasion more properly to treat in our evening lesson. The present use of this most important doctrine is, to lead us to observe, That as we had this fairest *image* of God in full perfection before our fall, but lost it wholly by sin; the great end and design of religion, and of all that Christ hath done for us, and of all that he requires of us to do, is, to retrieve this sacred image, this spiritual life we lost; and that the only means by which it can be restored, and which alone can save us from the penalty and fatal consequences of our fall, is repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.—To the ignorance of, or too common inattention to, this doctrine, are owing all those corruptions in faith and practice, which so generally prevail among Christians of all denominations.

29. *And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth; and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat.*

30. *And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.*

Did man consider himself as in a state of nature only, without any other advantages or privileges than what he enjoys in this world, and without any prospect or hope of a better; yet the gifts and benefits he hath received from the hand of his Maker, for the comfort and delight, as well as the necessary support of life, are so great as to merit all the service and gratitude he is capable of towards so bountiful a benefactor.—Nor is there any room for the least cavil against the kind of food

here granted, as too mean, or too sparing.—The great art of liberality and love is, to make well-chosen gifts; to adapt the bounty to the taste and liking, as well as the want and necessity, of the receiver.—This cer-

certainly was done by the all-wise and gracious Creator, when he appointed fruits and vegetables for the first men of the world: For in the primitive state of nature, while the earth retained its original fertility and vigour, all its productions of *herbs, plants, and fruits*, had such a virtue and sweetness in them, as not only afforded sufficient nourishment, but were highly grateful and pleasant to the taste.—Under this article of food, we are likewise to understand all the other comforts and accommodations of life: All which laid man under greater obligations of thankfulness, and faithful service, than his whole life, had it continued immortal, was sufficient to repay. And if, in a state of innocence, we contracted so much larger a debt to the divine favour, than was in our power even then to discharge; how little able are we now to acquit our engagements, when the mercies we have received are so much greater, and our abilities so much less! Or rather, how monstrous must all wilful ingratitude be, to so much goodness! How criminal all neglect of such returns of thanks and service, as are in our power to make!—Nay, may we not add, how absurd, and even ungrateful, must it be to vie merits with God, and to charge the very best of our actions as a debt upon him, to whose free grace alone we stand indebted for them!—No: the true Christian is of a principle more just, as well as humble: He considers himself at all times as a poor insolvent; and therefore every day prays the forgiveness of debts, which are not in his power to pay.

31. *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

As infinite wisdom and goodness contrive, and almighty power executes the divine will, it is agreeable to the same wisdom to reflect upon, and take a survey of, the work when done.

—This hath hitherto been represented to us, as God's

constant procedure at the close of every day's work of creation. He reviewed all the business of each day, and, behold, all was *good*: But here, at the conclusion, he takes a view not only of the day's particular work, but makes, as it were, a general survey of the whole; and then pronounces all, not only *good*, but *very good*;—*good* in particular, and each in their several kinds;—*good* in the general, and with respect to the whole.—This is recorded for our instruction, that we should, at least, imitate the divine wisdom, in considering every action we have done, whether it be *good* or not; particularly every evening, to examine the transactions of the foregoing day; but more especially, at such times when we are preparing to attend upon God at his table; or at the end of our days of life, when we are going to appear before his judgment-seat.—But whereas, on every impartial review of our own works, conscience will ever pronounce them not *good*, but evil, there is no way left for us to rectify that evil, but confession and repentance; nor any way of doing works that are *good*, but by the grace of God thro' faith in Christ.

To conclude; by this last and general survey which God is pleased to take of all his works, and the judgment he passes thereon, we are taught this farther lesson, That altho' a work may be *good* in itself, yet it is not *very good*, except it agree with, and complete the perfection and goodness of, the whole; except all conspire to one wise end, one uniform design; except all be of a piece with every part, and all centre in unity. Such an harmony is the very image and superscription of God on all the works which he hath made; and should be the rule and model of ours.

On ver. 6. *Element of fire.*] No express mention of the element of *fire* being made in the whole process of the creation, altho' the other three elements are distinctly named, it seems very reasonable to suppose, that it is to be understood under the phenomenon of *light*, verse 3. It is true, scarce any of the commentators have so

explain'd it; and it is of little use to set down the various expositions they have given us of the *light* there spoken of. But as the poet *Ovid*, in his description of the creation, gave the first hint to a sentiment which appears so agreeable to reason, and the nature of things, the reader is humbly referred to the account that he has given us, of the beginning of the world; both as it serves to illustrate this part of the *Mosaic* system, and so expressly confirms what we have advanced concerning the element of fire.

Metamorph. Book the Ist.

Ante mare & terras, &c.

Thus Englished by Mr. Dryden.

" Before the seas, and this terrestrial ball,
 " And heav'n's high canopy, which covers all,
 " One was the face of nature; if a face:
 " Rather a rude and undigested mass;
 " A lifeless lump, unfashion'd, and unfram'd,
 " Of jarring seeds, and justly *chaos* nam'd.
 " No sun was lighted up, the world to view;
 " No moon did yet her blunted horns renew;
 " Nor yet was earth suspended in the sky;
 " Nor, pois'd, did on her own foundation lie.
 " Nor seas about the shores their arms had thrown;
 " But earth, and air, and waters, were in one.
 " Thus air was void of light, and earth unstable,
 " And water's dark abyss un-navigable.
 " No certain form on any was impress'd:
 " All were confus'd, and each disturb'd the rest.
 " For hot and cold were in one body fix'd;
 " And soft with hard, and light with heavy, mix'd.
 " But God and nature, while they thus contend,
 " To these intestine discords put an end.
 " Then earth from air, and seas from earth were driv'n,
 " And grosser air sunk from æthereal heav'n.
 " Thus disembroil'd they take their proper place;
 " The next of kin contiguously embrace;
 " And foes are sunder'd by a larger space.
 " The force of *fire* ascended first on high,
 " And took its dwelling on the vaulted sky.
 " Then air succeeds, in lightness next to fire;
 " Whose atoms from unactive earth retire.
 " Earth sinks beneath, and draws a num'rous throng
 " Of pond'rous, thick, unwieldy seeds along.
 " About her coasts unruly waters roar,
 " And, rising on a ridge, insult her shore."

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We have since met with a late judicious writer * concurring in the same opinion, That in that body of *light*, which sprung up out of the abyfs, at the divine command, was comprehended the element of *fire*. His words are these ;—" By the command of " the Deity, the *igneous particles*, which are the cause of *light*, free- " ing themselves from the rest of that heterogeneous mixture, which " made up the *chaos*, united themselves into a body, which God " called *day*, to distinguish it from that *darkness*, which hitherto had " reigned, &c."

Afterwards he adds, " That aggregated body of *light*, which " had hitherto illuminated the new-created world, having per- " formed all those offices, unto which it was suited, he, by whose " *Word* it was produced, was pleased to divide it, saying, Let there " be *lights* in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day from the " night, &c."

* J. Campbell, Esq; in his History of the Bible, 1734.





*The Sunday called SEPTUAGESIMA; or,
The Third Sunday before LENT.*

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. ii.

The Sabbath instituted. The planting of *Eden*.
The tree of life. Tree of knowledge forbid-
den. The creatures named by *Adam*. Woman
made; and marriage instituted.

1. **T**HUS the heavens
and the earth were
finished, and all the host of
them.

2. And on the seventh day
God ended his work which
he had made: and he rested
on the seventh day from all
his work which he had
made.

3. And God blessed the
seventh day, and sanctified
it: because that in it he had
rested from all his work,
which God created and
made.

ALL the host of them;]
that is, all the several
creatures, which in the fore-
going chapter God is said to
have made; from the high-
est angel in heaven, to the
meanest reptile; or the still
more inferior species of in-
animate things on earth. All
these, as distributed into their
several classes and orders,
like so many armies, are here
called *hosts*; and God, as
the King and Ruler of all,
is very often called the *Lord*
of *hosts*.—And to let us un-
derstand, that the whole sy-
stem

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stem of the world was so *finished* within the space of six days, that nothing was wanting to complete the plenitude and perfection of it, God is said, not only to have *rested* on the *Seventh Day*, but that he consecrated it as a day of rest to all mankind, to the intent it might be a standing and perpetual memorial of the indefective excellency of the glorious work he had made; and thereby make the stronger and more lasting impression of duty on the mind of man, for whose sake and benefit it was thus framed and prepared; that so every Seventh Day, or one day in every seven, might be set apart, and observed by him and his posterity, in a religious commemoration of God's almighty power and providence, with meditations, prayers, and praises, becoming a creature endowed with reason, and encompassed with the blessings of his good and great Creator.—It suggests to us likewise, that as God *rested* from his works, so shall we enter into rest (as St. Paul reasons, *Heb. iv. 1.*), if so be we are of his people.—But God rested not from his works, until they were *finished*; neither should we.—God's works were all good; so should ours.—Observe we further, how gracious the Lord is: He gives us indeed all our time, and yet requires but a *Seventh* part, as an acknowledgment of our dependence on him. But who, alas! in strictness complies with this command? Even this small proportion is rendered impracticable for us by the common and unavoidable interruptions of meat and drink, and sleep, and the other necessities of life.—Nevertheless, we must still be just to God, and render to our Lord, and sovereign proprietor, a faithful account of this article of time.—Now this may be done, if what cannot be discharged on one day, be made up out of our other days; if the time we borrowed from God's *Seventh* day, be repaired out of our own six. So shall we give to God what is his due; so shall we be just stewards of this precious talent of time; so shall we sanctify our every day by sanctifying a portion of them

them to God; so will he bless our labours, if we thus observe his Sabbath; so shall we serve him truly all the days of our life, and finally enter into the rest and joy of our Lord.

4. *These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created; in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens;*

5. *And every plant of the field, before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew; for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground,*

6. *But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground,*

In this short, but faithful and most authentic account of the origin of the universe in general, and of the first state of things in this our earth in particular, we learn that the world was not from eternity; that matter, and all things which are, were made out of things which were not; that is, were created out of nothing; and not only so, but that no herb or tree, or plant, of any kind, were produced by seed from others, or sprung up out of the earth spontaneously, but were all immediately created by almighty power, and then set in the ground for

growth and propagation.—What is further extraordinary in the production of vegetables is this:—They grew not, when thus planted in the earth, by the influence of the sun, nor any regular showers of rain, much less by the cultivation of mankind (for neither sun, nor man, had yet a being), but by a *mist*, which by the immediate power of God was raised from the earth, and then distilled, as from a watering-pot, *to water the whole face of the ground*.—This stands here at the very entrance of God's book, to stop the mouth of vain philosophy, which ascribes all things to natural causes only. We see here, that God is the First cause of all things, the sole Author of their being; and what we call nature, is only that law he hath given to his several creatures, which shall not be

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be broken^a:—It confutes also the idle opinion, that there were Preadamites, or men before *Adam*; it being expressly said, *There was not a man to till the ground.*

7. *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.*

This chapter is in some degree a recapitulation^b of the foregoing, with the addition of some particular circumstances not mentioned before. In the six preceding verses we have a summary relation of the

world's creation, with the additional account of the institution of the Sabbath, and^a the reason why the *Seventh* day was sanctified for that purpose. Here the sacred historian proceeds to recite again the creation of man, but with a circumstance extraordinary, superadded to the first account.—In the preceding chapter we were told, That man was made in the image of God; that he was *blessed*, and *created male and female*: Here we are more particularly informed, that man was endued with a *soul*, as well as body; that this soul, or rational spirit, was not out of the ground, as his body, or the animal spirit, was, but immediately from God; even by the inspiration, or inbreathing, of the Almighty: By which we are to understand, That man not only received from God a soul endued with reason, but, to crown all, with the very life of GOD: The Divine life was superadded to the life of sense and reason; and by this last gift it was, that man became a *LIVING soul*.

Thus man grew up to perfection under the hand of his Creator. First, he is formed out of the dust,

^a *Psalms* cxlviii.

^b This method is observable in other parts of the holy Scriptures. Thus the book of *Deuteronomy* is a repetition of the laws of God, with useful reflections thereupon. St. *John's* gospel is in like manner a recapitulation of the other gospels, with more express attestations of the proper Divinity of the Word, or Son of God made man.

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a complete and duly organized body; then is quickened, as others of the terrestrial kind, with an animal spirit, in which the appetites and passions reside, as they do in them; then was formed the *soul*, of a substance altogether different from the body, and infused into him by the breath of the Almighty; the same breath, at the same time, inspiring this soul with a principle of an heavenly and divine nature; which was rather a grace and favour bestowed thereon, than any part of its essence, or naturally belonging thereto.—This may suffice, to shew the superlative privilege conferred on man, both by creation and grace.

8. *And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

9. *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

10. *And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.*

11. *The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.*

12. *And the gold of that*

2. Another privilege bestowed on man was the placing him in a terrestrial paradise.—To represent this favour in the stronger light, it is observable, that *Adam* was not formed in *Eden*, but out of the common earth, as the beasts and reptiles had been, and then taken and placed there. So that in respect to the place of his original, *Eden* was to the eastward of it. In this garden so situated, so adorned and planted by the very hand of God; so delightful and abounding with all that could regale and feast the senses, as well as feed and nourish the animal life; was man put, to dress it, and to keep it;—his very labour and employment, as well as the exquisite delights of the place,

land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx-stone.

13. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it.

above all to keep it: not to forsake it by schism; nor forfeit our paradise, as Adam did, by sin and disobedience: For there only is the tree of life; there only is the tree of knowledge.

16. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat:

17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

"knowledge of his laws"^d.—That man should have a law, was also necessary, as he was a rational creature, capable of moral good and evil, of choosing and

place, concurring to make him completely happy, even with respect to his natural life and condition.—It also prefigured to us, wherein the spiritual happiness of man doth consist.—We are all formed by nature of the common earth, of the earth earthy, but taken out of the world, and placed in the Eden of the church;—not there to be idle, and take our pastime therein, but to dress it, to cultivate and improve the station, in which we are placed; and

A farther prerogative which God bestowed on man, was to give him a LAW.—That this is a noble privilege, may appear by that boast of the Psalmist, "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation, neither have the heathen

^c Heb. Dying, thou shalt die.

^d Psalm cxlviii. 19, 20.

refusing

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refusing the one or the other :—Necessary also in point of justice, as God had a right to his love and obedience, and made him capable of reward and punishment.—But, O how easy was the law ! how very easy the terms, on which the greatest happiness, or the greatest misery did depend !—In the midst of plenty, and a most unbounded affluence of all possible sweets, one only tree of the garden is forbidden.—No less than immortality of soul and body is made the promise and condition of obedience ; and death the penalty of breaking a law, which one would think nothing, but wantonness, could ever tempt to transgress.

18. *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone : I will make him an help meet for him.*

19. *And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them : and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*

20. *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field : but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.*

Another advantage, which God provided for man, was society. As he was rational, he was of course a social creature ; but forasmuch as none of the other creatures had the gift of reason and speech, man, tho' endowed with the other excellent privileges before - mentioned, was still, in effect, *alone* : He was solitary in the midst of all the flocks and herds, the chirping birds, and fragrant scenes of paradise.—A companion fit to converse with, and partake of these delights, was still wanting ; and to be thus *alone*, was, in God's own estimate, *not good* for man ; not a complete state, but rather a defect, in point of earthly happiness ; For love is the most powerful and active passion of the human soul, and cannot be easy without an object to act itself upon. If the object

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ject be inferior to, and of less dignity, than, the soul, it cannot answer her desires, nor gratify her love. God therefore provides man with an object equal to all the extent of his love, and in a WIFE gives him an *help, meet for him*; one that should be as a second self, like him in nature, knit to him in affection, helpful in all duties, present always *with him*, and in all things a *meet* and suitable companion for him.—Among many other reasons, why God was pleased to summon all the creatures to appear before *Adam*, this seems to be the chief: That man might plainly see, that in the creatures, which are of an inferior nature, and made subject to us, no solid or adequate happiness can be found; because there is no society can be held with them, no reciprocal affection.—In the midst of so great a croud *Adam* still remained *alone*, because, as it is added, *there was not found* [amongst them all] an *help MEET for him*. The other reasons, why God *brought the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air*, unto *Adam*, were these;—That he might have a sight of his fellow-creatures, which were made subject to him, and now brought to do him homage; that he might give them *names*; to distinguish one species from another; even such names, as might aptly express their respective natures and properties.—And how could man, the first man, and that at the first sight, so far penetrate into their several natures and properties, as to give them names suitable thereto (as it appears, that *Adam* did by the *Hebrew* names, whereby he called them^c), without the light of a supernatural philosophy, communicated from the Author of their beings, and of the several properties and diversities of their nature.—This giving of names to the animals, was not only a mark and exercise of sovereignty over them, but even a sen-

^c See *Ainsworth*.

fible display to *Adam* himself (and should be so to us) of that supernatural operation of the spiritual and divine life, which, by participation of the Holy Ghost, he had received to aid and illuminate his reason; and therefore, as a learned author rightly infers, is an invincible argument of the truth and reality of Divine revelation^f.

21. *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.*

22. *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*

23. *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.*

24. *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

A further blessing bestowed on man was MARRIAGE. Not only to provide him with an *help*, meet to solace, and divide with him the cares, but even the pleasures and enjoyments, of life, which are doubled and improved by participation; yea, not only to provide a companion for society and conversation, an object equal to all the desires and endearments of love, formed to propagate our species, and answer all the ends of natural affection, but in a mystery to represent to us the great design of our redemption; the church's union with Christ, and her original derivation from him; as the apostle hath intimated to us; *Phil. v. 32.*—These are

the blessings, which God ordained to crown the married state; these the principal ends, which ought to direct our design, and determine our choice, in an article, whereon depends the greatest happiness, or greatest misery, of human life.—Were this duly at-

^f So Dr. Delany in *Revelat. examined with candour.*

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tended to, we should have more reason to bless and praise God for this holy institution; and less, much less, causes of complaint:—Then husband and wife would be indeed *meet* and mutual helps to each other, not only in all temporal concerns, but in promoting the salvation and eternal happiness of each other.

This is now bone of my bones.] Observe we the strong emphasis which belongs to the particle *now*: as if he had said, “Ay, *now*, I have found a companion, an “*help* every way suitable, every way *meet* for me.— “What I could not find in any of the rest of the “creatures, tho’ excellent in their kind, I find *now* “in a wife; a consort, of my own nature and substance, even *bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.*”—He that finds *Christ*, may say the same: He became *bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh*, when he assumed our nature; we are as intimately and vitally united to Him, when we have been incorporated into his church, and duly partake of his Sacraments.

They were naked.]—This may seem a disadvantage, 25. *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.* a condition less happy, than that of birds and beasts, who are cloathed with feathers, hair, or wool, to defend their bodies from the impressions and inclemency of weather. But if we consider, not only that before the fall of man the air had contracted no intemperature, and that their innocence was a security against shame, but that they were in truth more gloriously clad, than any of their descendants have ever been, for they were cloathed with the robe of righteousness; yea, with rays of glory surrounding them, so that their nakedness did not appear: And what could be a more gorgeous cloathing than this?—That their nakedness was so cloathed upon, was the opinion of the primitive Fathers, and is very agreeable to what may

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may be gathered from the transfiguration of our Lord, whose very raiment, we are told, "became shining, even exceeding white as snow^s, &c." For we may reasonably presume, that Christ was pleased to exhibit this appearance in the holy mount, that so we might in some measure apprehend, how man was clad before his fall, and in what manner we shall be cloathed after our resurrection.—It teaches also the Divine privilege of purity, and unspotted innocence; that there can be no *shame*, where there is no guilt.—In this state of innocence therefore it was man's glory to be naturally *naked*, but supernaturally cloathed upon with honour and immortality by the bright emanations of that Divine Spirit, whereof he was the living Temple, and which, like the *Shechinah* in the Tabernacle, not only irradiated his soul within, but shone forth, and invested his body with most effulgent beams.—We may add, This was another way, wherein man bore the image and likeness of God.—"How then," as the *Chaldee Paraphrase* expresses it, "could they know what shame was, who were cloathed with glory?"

To conclude; if we consider seriously, from the reading of the morning lesson, WHAT GOD IS; how great, almighty, and wise, he appears to be by the creation of this heaven and this earth; how beneficent and gracious to man, as this our evening lesson informs us; if we consider, what man was in his original state, how dignified and distinguished above all other visible creatures; can we now (in this our present forlorn condition) make any doubt of the reasonableness and justice of confessing and repenting of those sins, whereby we have degraded our nature, and offended so great, so gracious a Being, our Maker, our Benefactor,

^s Mark ix. 3.

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and our GOD?—And to make us thoroughly sensible, WHY we ought to repent, was, as before observed, the main design of both these lessons.—That very shame, which in a state of innocence we were strangers to, but now inherit by a natural descent, ought to excite our repentance and self-abhorrence.





*The SUNDAY called SEXAGESIMA; or,
The Second SUNDAY before LENT.*

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. iii.

P R E F A C E.

THE second step towards the discipline of true repentance, is to know WHAT we are to repent of: This we all know is SIN. But,

In order to repent of sin aright, we are taught in our morning lesson;

First, What sin is.

Secondly, How it came into the world.

Thirdly, The guilt and shame that necessarily attend it.

Fourthly, The penalty due from the justice of God, and which will most certainly be inflicted, except we repent.

Fifthly, The remedy provided by the divine mercy and grace, with the proper atonement, and means of pardon.

Sixthly, In the history of the corrupt state of the world before the flood, as contained in our evening lesson, are represented the extreme misery, and certain destruction, which unrepented sin is productive of.

*The SUNDAY called SEXAGESIMA; or,
The Second SUNDAY before LENT.*

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chapter iii.

1. *N*OW the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field, which the LORD God had made: and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

THE devil, who was already cast out of heaven for his pride, could not without envy behold the happiness and innocence of this new-created pair; and therefore, resolving to attempt their ruin, and casting about how he might most effectually accomplish his malicious design, he observed that the *serpent* was the most *subtil* of any *beast which the Lord God had made*. Into this animal he conveys himself, and under this disguise (making use of the natural sagacity of that creature, to gain the more credit to his lyes, as well as to escape their notice, and avoid any terrifying appearances) he first addressed himself to the *woman*, as to the weaker vessel, and spake to this effect; “Is it true what I hear, that God hath laid so severe a restraint upon you, that you may not *eat of EVERY tree of the garden*? Are ye tied up to such strict rules, that you are not at liberty to gather where you please?”—As this insinuated a want of kindness, nay, a degree of envy in God towards them (which, if admitted, must needs lessen their love and gratitude to him); so we shall still find, upon tracing up any sin to its spring-head, that the first temptation was a motion to some doubt of God’s love, and a distrust of his word. Whenever any forbidden pleasure is the object, and such a thought arises in
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the heart, we may be assured it is the hissing of the same old serpent, who deceived our first parents.

2. *And the woman said unto the serpent; We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*

3. *But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

Instead of rejecting, as she ought, with the utmost indignation and abhorrence, so bold and impious a questioning of the divine command, the *woman* tamely and indiscretely enters into a conference with the enemy of God and man: And not indeed suspecting any evil or fraud in such a question, because as yet innocent herself, and without guile, she made him this reply, *We may eat, &c.*—Learn we hence the danger of parlying with temptation; for this, as our Lord expresses it^a, is “*Entering into it.*” Keep we rather at the utmost distance from, as well as daily pray, not to be led into it; remembering not only the divine prohibition, not to *eat* or *taste* of the forbidden fruit, but the wise caution also, not to *touch* it.

4. *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.*

5. *For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

This devil, having thus far insinuated himself, and gained so considerable an advantage, as to be listened to without any aversion or suspicion; and having thereby prevailed over her intellectual faculties; proceeded to make a bold assault on those more excellent virtues

and perfections of the soul, wherein the image and vital union with God did principally consist, namely, her faith and charity.—Faith, which is the bond that unites us to God, he at once cut asunder, and destroyed, by an impudent and audacious lye (flatly contradictory to God’s express declaration)—*That*

^a *Mat. xxvi. 41.*

they should NOT die: And then, to extinguish charity, and destroy all love and reverence for God, he impiously ascribes the interdiction of that one tree *in the midst of the garden*, to the effects of a base and dishonourable jealousy; as if God envied man the knowledge of good and evil, and had therefore forbidden him the fruit of that tree, lest they should become as wise and as happy as himself.

6. *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*

This stratagem having succeeded thus far, the tempter immediately proceeds to introduce and impress his own accursed image in the room of the divine; which, by this time, and by these infernal suggestions, he had most grievously impaired; so that the spiritual and divine life, which she had hitherto enjoy'd, as a peculiar privilege of her union with God, was now almost extinguish'd by her listening to the temptation of Satan. Her foolish heart became darkened; the Holy Spirit, who is the light and life of the soul, began to forsake her, insomuch that she could no longer discern spiritual things, nor distinguish between truth and falsehood, happiness and misery, good and evil.—In this wretched and forlorn estate, and the more miserable, because she was insensible of her misery; fallen, like *Lucifer* himself, from heaven, while she fancied herself ascending thither; and cast down from the highest pitch of glory, from heavenly and intellectual enjoyments, to the low and brutal pursuits of the mere animal and sensitive life; she looked with longing desire on the fruit which the serpent had recommended, and *saw that it was good—saw*: But with what eyes did she see?—Not of faith; for that was blinded: Not of reason; for that was darkened; but of sensuality and folly

folly (for how can the bodily eye relish tastes, and judge of what is *good for food*?) : It was with the eye of concupiscence and lust, with the eye of ignorance and pride, that she *saw*;—or rather, she believed on the Devil's word (so placing her trust, faith, and confidence, in that lying spirit, and, in effect, choosing him for her god); she believed him, I say, that the fruit which God had so solemnly forbidden, was, nevertheless, not only *good for food*, as well as *pleasing to the eye*; but of a special property to render them wiser and happier than God had made them.—She therefore no longer hesitated to *take and eat* of the forbidden tree, and prevailed on her husband also to do likewise.—So contagious is the poison of sin; not only corrupts the person who commits it, but is industrious to propagate its plague and infection to all that are near to, and conversant with it.

7. *And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.*

Thus fell they, even both of them, from their original innocence; and being now alienated from the life of God, they became poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked.—They felt indeed a load of guilt and shame; they found their glory was departed from them, and themselves, as it were, stript, forlorn, and destitute; yet still so infatuated were they, as not to reflect on the true cause of this their shame and confusion, namely, the loss of that robe of righteousness, and beams of heavenly glory, wherewith they had been adorned; but imputed it only to the nakedness of their bodies; looking now on things after the outward appearance only, and guided wholly by the eyes of sense, and carnal reason, which represented that to be the object of shame, which innocence had never before reflected on as such.—Wherefore, instead of applying to God for mercy, they had recourse to mere natural means for redress of their misery:

misery:—They *sewed fig-leaves together*, and *made themselves aprons*, to hide their shame.—O wretched change! O fatal verifying of the devil's oracle! Eyes *opened* indeed to see and *know* the evil they had brought upon themselves, but blind to know or discover the *good* they had lost!—Not *dead* indeed in a natural sense, having survived the fatal act of disobedience; but dead in trespasses and sins, dead in their spiritual and better part; dead to God, to innocence and peace!

8. *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*

At the usual return of evening prayer, instead of coming into the presence of the Lord God, as they were wont, with joy and great gladness, to offer up their oblations of praise and thanksgiving to their bounteous Lord and Benefactor, *Adam* and his wife *hid themselves* from his presence among the thickets of the garden.—O the misery and folly of man enslaved to sin!—O the mercy and goodness of God to fallen man!—He leaves us indeed (as justice requires) to the onset, but not to the absolute power, of the tempter; he suffers us to be tried, but not to be destroyed, tho' vanquished, and cast down.—He comes here *in the cool of the day*, “as afterwards he came, towards “the end of the world, to seek and to save that “which was lost^b.”—But, in the conduct of *Adam* and his wife, we behold the sad degeneracy of human nature, and the desperate effects of sin: It awakens the conscience to sting and torment us with guilt and shame; but drives us away from the only remedy of our wounded souls; making us to dread our very cure, and to fly from our physician.—Great was the folly to fly *from the presence* of him who is omnipresent; but a far greater folly to shun the help that alone can relieve us, and to choose our

^b So *Iren.* l. 5. c. 15.

own ruin!—Yet so great is the compassion of our gracious God, that he leaves us not at once to the effects of so mad a choice.

'Tis only by the word of God calling to us, that we are, or can be, converted from the error of our ways, and be restored to God and ourselves.—*The Lord God called unto Adam*: And who was he that called, but the Word itself, the blessed Son and Word of God?—It was he that here appeared and called (“For no man hath seen the Father at any time, nor heard his voice”): And he came to *Adam* in a double capacity, as Judge, and as Saviour: First, as Judge, to try and condemn; then as Saviour, to redeem.—His coming to us is also twofold, but the order is inverted; First, he comes as Saviour; hereafter, only as Judge (see *John* xii. 47.).

Where art thou?] A question not of ignorance, but a summons to judgment.—*WHERE art thou?* “Where dost thou think thyself to be?—Concealed from the all-seeing eye of God?—That cannot be: No thicket can screen thee from my sight.—*WHERE ART thou?*—How forlorn and deplorable is the condition thou art now in! how lost to thyself and me!—Where is thy innocence; where that happiness I invested thee with before thy fall?—Where that happiness the false tempter promised?—Where the expected advantages of thy transgression?”—This is the call, these the general interrogatories which by his delegate conscience, or by the ministry of his church, the Judge still puts to every wilful offender, in order to awaken him into a sense of his sin and misery; and to lead him to repentance, and confession of his fault.

By this passage we may also learn, what is the true nature of original sin. First, It consisted in the loss of the spiritual and divine life, which had been su-

^c *John* v. 37.

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peradded to complete the happiness, and immortalize the other lives of man^d; but was immediately withdrawn, on the very day and instant of his transgression.—Secondly, In consequence hereof, ensued a separation between God and man. This is implied in man's *flying from* God, and the Lord's *seeking* him as a fugitive, and lost; for who seeketh that which is with him?

Note, A right notion of the fall of man is the very basis of true divinity: Without this there can be no clear idea of the Christian system, nor any just apprehension of the nature and design of our redemption by *Jesus* Christ, the mediator of the new covenant.—By disobedience we forfeited the Holy Spirit; by losing the Holy Spirit we fell from God; by falling away from God, we lost not only all innocence, happiness, and immortality, but all possibility of a recovery from our fall.—As dead, we had no power to rise; as enemies to God, we had no interest or merit to plead for a pardon:—And in this desperate and forlorn estate we must have continued for ever, had not God's own arm brought salvation to us^e; that is, had not *Jesus* Christ appeared as advocate and intercessor on our behalf;—First, To renew the covenant between God and man.—Secondly, To satisfy the offended justice of God.—Thirdly, To perform a perfect and unfinning obedience to the whole law.—Fourthly, To restore the Holy Spirit, that so man also might be enabled to keep the new covenant, and do works of righteousness.—Fifthly, That man might overcome sin and death, and not only arise to newness of life here, but to life immortal in the world to come, by an happy and glorious resurrection.—These things hath Christ done, or is still doing, for us; and will finally accomplish at the last day, when death shall be swallowed up in victory.—He hath already atoned for our sins by his death;

^d See on chapter ii.

^e *Isaiab* lix. 16. chap. lxiii. 5.

he hath risen again for our justification; he hath restored to us the Holy Spirit; and at last will raise us also, by the power of his resurrection.—In the mean time, it is our part, and our wisdom, to be putting to ourselves, and those under our care, this question of God to *Adam, Where art thou?* What is thy state to God-wards? Art thou in covenant with him? Art thou one of those people of Christ, whom he will save from their sins? Hast thou received the Holy Ghost? Dost thou repent? Dost thou believe? Dost thou obey? Forasmuch as we are infallibly assured by Christ, and his Church, that thro' repentance we become partakers of the benefits and merits of his death and passion; that by faith we are united to him, renewed by his Spirit, and reconciled to the Father; and that, by obedience, we are intitled to the inheritance he has purchased for us, and promised, in the kingdom of heaven.

10. *And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden; and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.* As sin brought with it guilt and shame, so did it fear and prevarication:—*I was afraid, because I was naked.* It was very true, that he was afraid; he had cause

to fear the offended justice of God, and the execution of that penalty of death, which it had denounced. But to lay his fears upon his nakedness, was as false as it was weak and frivolous.—Before their fall, both the man and his wife were naked, and *were not ashamed*, chap. ii. 25. Why then are they now ashamed, or afraid, on that account? Could it be supposed, that God would be offended at his being *naked*, if his nakedness had been no other than it was before his sin? But it is ever the nature of sin to have recourse to fig-leaves and vain excuses, to cover its own deformity, to evade the truth by false pretences, and prevaricate both with God and man;—*I was afraid, because I was naked*; whereas the true reason of his fear was his sin: But this he had not the grace
nor

nor ingenuity to own. This he foolishly, or rather impiously, hoped to conceal from God, and to deceive, as well as disobey, his Maker.

11. *And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat?*

God proceeds like a wise judge, to sift and examine into the true merits of the cause, by proper and home questions. *Who told thee,* &c. As much as to say, "How camest thou to know *that thou wast naked;*—

"more naked now, than before? How camest thou to be sensible of any shame for being so?—Where there are fear and shame; there must be guilt and sin.—*Hast thou eaten,* &c. hast thou then transgressed my commandment, and violated thy obedience?"—St. *Chrysostom* observes hereon, "That whereas God, without any imputation of severity or rigour, might have immediately condemned and punished, he was nevertheless so good and gracious, as to proceed rather by this gentle way of question and examination, without the least harshness or reproach, as if he would not only oblige him to confess his fault, but encourage him also to hope for pardon."

12. *And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.*

Another property of sin is, to palliate and lessen its guilt; to throw the blame on others, nay, upon God himself, rather than upon ourselves;—so *Adam, The*

W O M A N *Thou gavest me, gave me of the tree, &c.* This shews also that the shame which attends the commission of sin, is an evil shame^f; not modesty, but the bare consciousness of a real turpitude, and indignity, that is natural to it: For no sooner is the mask taken off, and the

^f *Pudor malus.* Hor.

sin detected, but it passes to the contrary extreme, from shame to shamelessness, and downright impudence.—Thus *Adam* owns the fact, but not the fault; *I did eat*: But the blame he lays on the woman, and even upon God, for giving her to him.—In like manner *Eve* pleads guilty to the action, but not to the crime: She throws all the load of that upon the serpent.

13. *And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

But altho' this answer of hers wanted the ingenuity of a full and free confession; it carried in it a circumstance, which God is pleased to admit of, as a great extenuation of the fault; to wit, the power and subtilty of the tempter. His dexterity in changing shapes, and putting false colours upon things, made the deceit appear the more excusable: So that no premeditated malice, or formal rebellion against God, appearing in the fact, or process of this affair, the divine mercy had fair room to interpose in man's behalf.

14. *And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*

The Judge of all the earth having convicted the criminals, he proceeds to pass sentence upon them: And, first, he begins with the author and contriver of the mischief:—And here appears a very remarkable difference in his proceeding with the seducer, and the parties seduced by him:

These last he had examined, that he might not only convince them of their sin, but gently lead them to the only plea they had for mercy; to wit, the guile and imposture of Satan.—Him he charges and condemns directly, because, in his case, there was no need

need of confession, no room for apology: And yet he condemns not him by name, because sentence had passed on him before for his rebellion; but, for this new act of treason, the immediate indictment and verdict are pronounced against his instrument the *serpent*, and only glancingly on himself.—Howbeit, if a poor animal, for being accessory to the ruin of man, be *curst above all cattle*, certainly Satan must be accursed above all spirits, and above every creature: And, as St. *Chrysostom* observes, “There was a resemblance in the punishment of the possessing spirit, and the animal possessed; that, as the one had been cast down from heaven to hell, so the *serpent*, from an erect and stately motion, was doomed to grovel on the ground, and to lick the *dust*.”—And if the serpent, tho’ an involuntary agent, was made a monument of God’s vengeance, for being the instrument of man’s destruction, how ought we to shun all occasions of being parties, whether principals or abettors, in aiding and assisting to the hurt, or deceiving, of our neighbour!—Men may affect to show their wit and cunning, by such over-reaching of others; and too many, whom God has endued with the sagacity of serpents, do suffer themselves to be employed by the devil, as this serpent was, in seducing or circumventing their brethren. But what will their wages be, for such an infernal service? What, but a certain and inevitable *curse* from heaven, and dust and disappointment from their employer; even fraud for fraud, deceiving, and being deceived?—So dangerous is the wisdom of the serpent, without the innocence of the dove!

15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

To complete the sentence both against the animal and spiritual serpent, and at the same time to display the divine mercy towards fallen man, thereby to give them hopes of recovery, and engage

gage them to a new obedience; God is pleased to declare, That as animal serpents should thereafter be the most hurtful and odious of all creatures to mankind, who, on the other hand, would endeavour to kill and destroy them; so, in like manner, should there be an irreconcilable *enmity* between men and devils: And, altho' this bitter adversary would perpetually be endeavouring, by his wiles and stratagems, to seduce the posterity of mankind from their obedience to God; yet should he not be able to effect the final ruin of any, without their own free choice, and consent to his temptations: Nay, that there should afterwards, from the *seed* of this very *woman*, whom he had now beguiled, arise a blessed offspring (even *Jesus Christ* the Messiah, born of a virgin, and so in a special sense, *the seed of the WOMAN*), that should for ever break his accursed power and policy, destroy his kingdom, and be the complete Saviour of all men that would believe in, and obey him.

And here beginneth the first promise of grace and life to mankind, now "dead in sin, and enemies to God."—The mysterious words wherewith it was delivered, were the first sound of the gospel; which, to our first parents, lying under the sentence of condemnation, were indeed glad tidings, as they were tidings of peace and salvation.—In them were contain'd the sum and substance of what we rightly call the SECOND COVENANT, a covenant of grace and faith, as the former (now broken and dissolved) was of works; so that thenceforward man was not to be saved by his own works, but by faith in the Redeemer.—This was the faith, by which *Adam*, and the patriarchs, were to obtain salvation; this is the faith, by which Christians are now saved. They believed in a Saviour who was to come: We believe that he is come.—The Saviour is one, and the faith is the same.—Christianity then is antient indeed; yet not, as some have ignorantly thought, as old as the creation;

but as old as the second covenant: With this only it commenced, and bears an equal date therewith.

16. *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

Next to the serpent the woman receives her sentence, because next to him, and before her husband, in the transgression; guilty of her own personal sin, and of his also.—But withal we may observe, that the punishment inflicted both on the

woman and the man, was so qualified (the man's toil, the woman's pain, &c.), that it did not render them absolutely wretched and miserable; tho' the smart of it convinced them of their own folly, and of God's justice and power.—Nay, we may truly say, our punishment in this world is no otherwise a *curse*, than as we make it: For, in the midst of judgment, God remembers mercy; and indeed his only end and design, in every afflictive dispensation, is rather to raise us from our fall, than to punish.—The next life only is the theatre of strict justice; this is properly the season of trial, and the day of grace.—But tho' the first part of the woman's sentence is penal, and was to be a constant admonition to repentance [*I will multiply thy sorrow*]; it is attended, we see, with a benediction of pregnancy and child-birth: And the latter part is altogether a blessing; her *desire* and subjection to her husband being her best and only security in this troublesome world.—Had this been the law of her creation, it would not have been now made the penalty of her fall, but possibly might have prevented it: And if she now comply more faithfully with this law of her present state and condition, it will effectually restore her to all she forfeited by the fall; yea, to more than she lost: For under the gospel she is promised to be “*saved in child-bearing*,”

“ that is, in bearing children to God; if so be, by
 “ her pious care, they continue in faith, and chari-
 “ ty, and holiness, with sobriety;”—yea, in bearing
 a Saviour to men, as well as a Son to God, the ever-
 blessed JESUS.

17. *And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.*

18. *Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.*

19. *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Lastly, the penalty inflicted upon *Adam*, for complying with his wife in the transgression, was labour and sorrow, crosses and cares, sickness and death; the very ground was cursed for his sake. Instead of a Paradise, a garden of pleasure, yielding the most delicious fruits of its own accord, for his food, the earth is sentenced to bring forth such a mixture of unprofitable weeds, and noxious plants, as should cost him, and his posterity, perpetual sweat and toil in the earning of their bread; that it should produce the thistle and thorn, instead of the tree of life, and mix with our very food the principles of corruption and mortality;

and, at last, find man a grave, as it had given him birth. —Thus the course of nature was inverted, and the creature, which at first was made to serve man, became subject to corruption^b, that so it might be both the punishment and monitor of his revolt from God; and the penalty correspond to his crime. For, besides the high affront put upon God by *Adam*, in hearkening more to his wife, than to his Maker, there was, in his transgression, an inversion of rule and order; the man, tho' head and lord of the woman, not reproving and

^b Rom. vii.

animadverting upon her disobedience, as it was his place and duty to have done, but fondly yielding to her solicitation, and partaking of her sin. Hence it comes to pass, by the just retribution of heaven, that not only the inferior parts of the creation, the vegetable and animal world, but the moral and intellectual faculties of man, as well as his appetites and passions, which before were subject and subordinate to reason, turned rebels to the inner man, and destroy'd the peace and order of the lesser world; the will mutinying against the understanding, the passions against the will, the senses against reason, the flesh against the spirit.—Hence that sense of guilt, that ignorance and error, that depravity and perverseness, which the mind of man, in its three noble faculties of memory, understanding, and affections, is universally subject to, and the best of men complain of (see *Rom. vii.*); as well as that repugnancy to good; and proneness to evil, which the bodily appetites incline us to.—O wretched man! O this body of sin and death! O fatal effects of our miserable fall!—A complicated fall: First, From God; the golden chain, which united man to the divine nature, being rescinded by disobedience.—Secondly, From himself; reason, the distinguishing character and prerogative of man, being deposed from her throne by passion and sense.—Thirdly, A fall from immortality to corruption, from life to death: And, fourthly (the last and most dreadful lapse of all!) from a temporal death to an eternal, even of body and soul in hell!—except repentance and mercy interpose a remedy.

“ And yet, in this dreadful judgment passed upon
 “ man, we may even read a mercy, and find the
 “ remedy. Our very griefs and disappointments,
 “ how severe soever in their task, are intentionally
 “ beneficial in their consequences; and all the un-
 “ easinesses we meet with, are no more than necessary
 “ to remind us of our future condition. Our wisdom
 “ doth but proceed from our wants; and the be-
 “

“ of us need the severe discipline which a good father practiseth upon an unthinking child, to keep him in the right way. For this reason, when God pronounced the sentence of death upon *Adam*, he at the same time expelled him out of Paradise, and reduced him to the necessity of eating his bread with sorrow.—The sentence of misery was well joined with that of mortality; that he might be excited by his griefs to look out for a future provision, when he should be laid in the dust, and secure a place of rest in a better world.—The full pleasures of Paradise would have robb’d him of the thoughts of death, and the preparation for it; but his labour and sorrow were designed for so many remembrancers of mortality, as well as means to lead, nay, to compel him to the happiness he had lost.”

20. *And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.* *Adam*, having, with all humility and contrition, received his sentence, and heard also with grateful attention the promise of a Saviour to him, and his posterity, who should be born of the seed of his own wife, did, upon this account, change her name from that of *woman*, to that of *Eve*, which, in the original, signifies life, or life-giving: For it may be presumed, that he, being under the apprehension of the death he had incurred by his transgression, was transported to hear of a reprieve from the present execution of that sentence, and expressed his joy by calling his wife by a new name, signifying not only one that should live, but also bear an offspring, which should also live, and be saved; yea, be the mother of that blessed seed, who should *bruise the serpent's head*, avenge mankind on the tempter, and raise them again to immortality and eternal life.

21. *Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the LORD* This cloathing of our first parents with the skins of beasts, carried a double aspect,
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God make coats of skins, aspect, representing both their misery, and their recovery; their rising again, as

well as their fall: For, at the same time, while this cloathing covered their nakedness from cold and shame, it could not but remind them of the base treachery of the tempter, and the very reverse of those vain hopes and expectations he had given them: For, instead of being, what he promised them, *As Gods*; their native dignity, as well as innocence and immortality, was departed from them; their glory turned into shame; their condition degenerated and sunk down to a level with the beasts that perish.—Those mortifying effects of Satan's lyes, and of their own too credulous and foolish ambition, were aptly figured to them by these *coats of beasts skins*.—They vainly aspired to be *as Gods*; behold, they are become like beasts; and the noble creature MAN degraded to a state below man!—But then, these *coats* were likewise a badge and signal of Divine mercy; while they shewed not only the amazing condescension and goodness of God, in making them such coverings for their comfort and convenience, but as they exhibited to them a daily and instructive emblem of the sacrifice of the death of *Christ*, and that robe of his righteousness, wherewith his sufferings and merits should cloathe them¹.

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¹ It appearing most probable, that the original of sacrifices was of divine institution; and that the same had been appointed by God himself, when he entred into a new covenant with *Adam* after his fall, and breach of the first; the cloathing of our first parents with *coats of skins*, may very rationally be accounted for.—The skins, doubtless, were the skins of beasts which had been slain; and we cannot but conclude, they were slain in sacrifice, as a typical representation of the Lamb of God, by whose death the sin of the world was to be done away, the divine justice to be satisfied, and the serpent's head bruised; that is, his infernal plot and contrivance against the salvation of mankind was to be defeated and destroyed.—This sacrifice, then, was, in truth, the sacramental pledge and symbol of the Christian covenant; and the use thereof was to

22. *And the LORD* Once more let us reflect
God said, Behold, the man on the wretched consequences
is become as one of us, to of our fall from God.—
know good and evil. And Man, not contented with in-
now, lest he put forth his nocence and immortality,
hand, and take also of the that best and most happy re-
tree of life, and eat, and semblance of God, affected
live for ever : also to be like him in know-
 ledge ;—and so lost both

life and innocence. This vain ambition, this danger-
 ous curiosity after the knowledge of evil (for good he
 knew, and was possessed of, before), could not possi-
 bly be gratified any other way, than by the loss of the
 good he enjoyed. Experience alone can give us the
 knowledge of evil ; whereas God knows it by vir-
 tue, or in consequence, of his infinite understanding
 and omniscience : And therefore, altho' the know-
 ledge of evil made man, in some respect, like unto
 God ; in another respect, of the greatest concern of
 all, it made him utterly unlike him ; as it defaced
 the divine image of righteousness and true holiness,
 which had been stamped upon the soul.—The true
 end, perfection, and happiness of man, is not to *know*,
 but to avoid, *evil* ; yea, so to avoid it, as, if it were
 possible, never to know it.—The communicable at-
 tributes of God are our best, and should be our only
 patterns of imitation : his incommunicable properties

continue until the *Messiah* should come in person to ratify the same,
 and verify the full effect of the redemption, promised and prefigured
 in the type.—Hence we find, that all believers of the true God un-
 der the Old Testament, who adhered to the covenant so renewed
 to *Adam*, did constantly retain the use of this sacramental type,
 in the solemnities of their public worship ; for so we read not only
 of *Abel's* sacrifice, but of *Noah, Abraham, Job*, and others, who
 offered such sacrifices to God ; inasmuch that such offerings con-
 joined with a covenant, became an essential part of the character of
saints, or worshippers of the true God ; for so the *Psalms* defines
 them, even in the words of God himself : “ Gather my saints to-
 gether unto me, those that have made a covenant with me with
 “ sacrifice.” *Psalms* l. 5.

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are the objects only of our praise and adoration.—His truth, his holiness, his goodness, we cannot too diligently aspire after; his power and infinite knowledge we ought to revere with the profoundest humility, but never presume to emulate.—“Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth^k.”—The very knowledge of God (which religion teaches), if it be alone, is dangerous;—if it lie in speculation only, and want morality, it turns to hypocrisy, or downright wickedness;—if it want charity, it ends in heresy, or infidelity.—Teach our hearts so to know thee, O Lord, as to love thee; make us so to love thee, as to be worthy to know thee, as far as is necessary to make us love thee more. *Amen.*

23. *Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken.*

The garden of Eden was the emblem of the church upon earth.—Man was not made in this Paradise, but placed there, after he was formed out of the earth (see chap. ii. 8.). So we are not of the church by nature, but by grace.—By nature we are all framed out of the same common and corrupt mass of human generation; which made David say, “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me^l.” But by the grace of God we are taken out of that state of pollution, and planted within the pale of his own garden the church: Here we are sanctified and cleansed; here we enter into covenant with God:—But as Adam, on his breach of covenant, was expelled from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken, so shall we be ejected out of the communion of saints, and church of the living God, if wilfully we break our solemn vow.

24. *So he drove out the man: and he placed at the*

The tree of life, or, in other words, the spiritual and divine life, was, by the

^k 1 Cor. viii. 1.

^l Psalm li.

east end of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

effects of sin, become inaccessible to man. This tree grows no where but in *Eden*, that is to say, the church. So St. *John* represents it as planted "on the side of that river of pure water, clear as crystal, which proceeded from the throne of God, and the Lamb," that is, baptism.—And, to signify the utter impossibility of ever attaining to it again, by the power of nature, after our fall from the state of grace, and loss of original innocence, it is said, that *cherubims were placed at the east end of the garden, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*—If by the *cherubims* we understand, with St. *Augustine*, the fulness of knowledge, implied in the name of those angelic powers; and, by the *flaming sword turning every way*, the endurance of trouble and affliction; we are taught hereby, that now there is no other way of regaining Paradise but by faith; and that thro' many tribulations we are to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Or may we not by the *cherubims* understand the clergy, whose station it is to guard the entrance of the church, that no profane thing may enter there; and from whose lips we are to seek knowledge?—And then, the *sword*, being a known emblem of the word of God, represents to us, that there is no coming to *Christ*, who is the true *tree of life*, but by the Scriptures: For so saith he himself, "Search the Scriptures; for they are they which testify of me." Yea, he bids and invites us to come unto him; so that now we need not fear to draw nigh and come.—If we do tremble at the brightness of those *cherubims*, and of that *flaming sword*, even this should not discourage our approach.—That very fear and

^m Rev. xxii.

ⁿ John v. 39. Mat. xi.

trembling,

trembling, when we come to God, is our security and assurance of defence.—Nay, if we suffer ourselves to be slain with this *sword*, happy shall we be, to have the old *Adam* die in us, that the new man may be made alive.—*Christ* himself hath shewn us the way, by dying to overcome death: He hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers; and, if we follow him, who is our guide unto death, that death which was made the punishment of our fall, shall become the gate to everlasting life.





*The SUNDAY called SEXAGESIMA; or,
The Second SUNDAY before LENT.*

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. vi.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Lesson (as noted before) sets before us, Sixthly, The deadly nature, and fatal consequences, of sin; as exemplified in the universal degeneracy and corrupt state of mankind before the flood, which provoked Almighty God to destroy with a deluge that world of the ungodly.

1. **A**ND it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

BY the history of the generations of Adam (that is to say, of the propagation of mankind upon the earth) we find an immediate division of them into good and bad men, pious and impious, believers and unbelievers. Of the very first two that were born into the world, one proved wicked, and the other holy. Our Lord's words favour

your this observation, who often distinguishes the wicked from the holy seed, telling the *Jews*, more than once (notwithstanding their being descended from *Abraham*), That they were “of their father the devil.” And the Holy Ghost, by the pen of *St. John*, hath expressly said, That “*Cain* was of that wicked one^b,” and in the same chapter tells us plainly, who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: Namely, “such as do righteousness, they are born of God; he that committeth sin, is of the devil.” This different character, which the New Testament hath given us of the two contrary seeds, is an easy and true comment on these words we have here in the Old, *The sons of God saw the daughters of men*.—The spiritual and the natural birth are here set in opposition to each other:—All indeed descended naturally from *Adam*, both the one and the other (as the original more plainly expresses it, that *ADAM*^c *began to multiply on the face of the earth*); but the godly were made the children of God; the ungodly became the children of the wicked one: The distinction arose from the difference which appeared in either sort, with regard to religion.—The *sons of God* were not therefore angels (as some have imagined), but such men as by faith had taken hold of the covenant of grace, and were thereby made (as we are now by baptism) the children of God.—The others, called children of *men*, were such as continued in their state of nature, thro’ unbelief, still under the guilt of original sin, and the consequent influence of the evil one; who are therefore, by the apostle, stiled “the children of wrath^d.”

Cain, for the horrid murder of his brother, had been excommunicated from the church, and communion of the faithful; which, probably, was the mark

^a *John* viii. ^b *Ex* τῷ πονηρῷ, 1 *John* iii. 12.
^d *Eph.* ii. 3.

^c So the

which God set upon him. That punishment seems to have been inflicted on him instead of death, which was not yet, by any express law, made the penalty of murder: And he not seeking to be reconciled to God, and restored to the peace of the church, by repentance; but persisting in an abandoned separation, and wilful state of wandering from God and his people (which probably gave occasion to the very country where he dwelt, to be called the land of *Nod*, that is, of wandering*); his posterity, of course, proved profligate and wicked like himself; without religion, and without God in the world.—The children of *Setb* (and, we may suppose, the other descendants of *Adam*) kept up the form of religion and piety in their families: But the *Cainites*, having no hope, nor desire of a better world, turned all their thoughts, as worldly men are wont to do, to make their best advantage of this: They built cities; invented music and arms, the arts of pleasure, and the arts of war; the one to solace themselves, the other to annoy their enemies.—Their women also, we may well suppose, were not wanting to find out, and cultivate, every female ornament of dress and beauty to captivate and ensnare the men.—These were the fatal arts which corrupted the morals, and depraved the principles, of the very *sons of God*, the professors of virtue and religion; and, by degrees, introduced an universal degeneracy, and, at last, a general apostasy from God and goodness; so that the whole world was filled with violence, and became a mere *aceldama* of bloodshed, and abominable lusts.—That atheism and infidelity were the epidemical sin of the old world, is highly probably from the character given to it by the apostle, who calls it, “The world of the ungodly†.” And St. *Jude*, speaking of such defilers of the flesh as knew nothing of divine things, nothing but what they knew naturally as brute beasts,

* So the *Hebrew* word signifies.
worshiped no God, 2 *Pet.* ii. 5.

† *Τῶν ἀσεβῶν*, i. e. who

faith of them, "They are gone in the way of Cain." —A warning this, to all that are serious, and bear the glorious character of the *sons of God*, to take heed how they intermarry into irreligious families, or converse with vicious and lewd women. Nothing alienates more from God, than impiety: He that is in covenant with him, should also, with the holy *Job*, make a covenant with his eyes. Nothing is more infectious than a wanton eye; it soon debauches the heart; and when lust hath once conceived, it soon bringeth forth death^f.

3. *And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

The *Hebrew* hath it, *My Spirit shall not always strive in man.*—The *Greek*, *shall not always remain in man.*—By both forms of expression we learn, That the Holy Spirit of God is also a most loving and beneficent Spi-

rit; that he is not only *with* man, but *in* man; that he *strives* indeed, and contends with him; but it is a most kind contention, a most gracious struggle, to compel him, as it were, to be happy; to persuade him, if possible, to forsake the wicked, and live. Long had he striven with the old world, even till within *one hundred and twenty years* of the flood: Yet neither did he cease, for that space of time (which also was a long reprieve from punishment) to solicit and plead with them, by the inward checks of conscience, and the outward preaching of *Noah*, to turn from the evil of their ways, and repent.

For that he also is flesh;] or rather, he is *also* flesh. This is added as the reason of God's long-suffering and forbearance, being taken from the consideration of the frailty of the human nature; nay, given as another reason why the Divine mercy bears with us so long. God, in his nature, is tender and compas-

^f James i. 5.

sionate; but man is naturally feeble and weak; his very composition makes him so: For tho' his nobler part is spirit, yet he is *flesh also*; tho' the spirit in him be willing, the flesh is weak; yea, "The corruptible body preffeth down the soul"; so that "we cannot do even the things we would." These two jarring principles (flesh and spirit) whereof we consist, are the grounds of that intestine war, which St. *Paul* so often mentions, and so heavily complains of, of the flesh against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.—On the issue and success of this conflict, depends our final happiness or misery.—The Divine Spirit, from its innate goodness, and as far is consistent with the freedom of the human will, and the law of our creation, takes part with our spirit, in opposition to the flesh; and if, thro' this Spirit of grace, we mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live; but if the flesh prevail (as it had in those antediluvian sinners), we inevitably die. The blessed Spirit will *strive* no longer, but deserts and leave us; so that thenceforward the whole man becomes *only* carnal, as St. *Paul* styles him, or, as here more abstractedly, he is *flesh*; i. e. a mere animal; destitute not only of the divine life, but the rational also; and sunk down into the lowest and most abject state of brutality and sense.

4. *There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown.*

5. *And GOD saw that*

As lust was the first inlet to that general corruption of the old world, here we have described to us the horrible effects of those impure mixtures and intermarriages of the religious part of mankind with the family of Cain.—In the first place, the issue of these profane matches proved a monstrous race, of

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the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

a gigantic and enormous size and strength. And then, under the institution of such parents, especially such mothers, what wonder that they became as monstrous

and overgrown in all manner of wickedness, profaneness, and cruelty, as they were in bulk and stature! —Mischief was their will; their will was their law; and all law and justice was measured only by their power to do evil: In this they placed all their greatness; became *mighty men*,* and acquired a name of *renown*; so that he who was the greatest tyrant, and did most mischief, was, *of old* (that is in those dreadful times), reckoned the greatest and most famous man.—It was high time for justice, yea, for mercy to the oppressed and more innocent part of mankind, that God should send an inundation of waters to cleanse the earth, and destroy so abandoned a race of incorrigible sinners.

6. *And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

7. *And the LORD said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

This being the season preparatory to the discipline of repentance, it seems very proper to remark, on this passage, not only that this is the first place in Scripture, where the mention of REPENTANCE occurs; but that from hence may clearly be understood, wherein the true nature of *repentance* doth consist: For altho' it be here said of God, that he *repented*; yet, as it is applied to him

after the manner of men only, and as other acts and passions are in the Scriptures (that is, improperly to him, but very properly to man), we are hereby taught, that a true and genuine repentance consists in these three things: First, A dislike of ~~what we have done~~ *amiss*,

amiss, arising from that displeasing reflection, which every sincere penitent conceives, on a review of his actions. And this, by the *Greeks*, is well expressed by [μεταμέλεια] an after-thought.—Secondly, It is said, God was *grieved at his heart*: This teaches us, That the next step in repentance is contrition; a deep and sincere compunction and sorrow for what is past.—And, thirdly, A resolution to undo, as much as in us lies, what we find cause to repent of.—The Lord said, *I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, &c. for it repenteth me that I have made them.*—So will the penitent resolve to *destroy* the whole body of sin, if he heartily repent that ever he committed it; he would gladly blot out the very remembrance of it, if it were possible; at least, is determined never to do it on any account, were it to do again.—And this effect of repentance answers to what the *Greeks* call [μετάνοια, or] a change of mind.—These three parts constitute the whole duty of repentance: Nor must we think, that we have any true repentance towards God, as St. *Paul* calls it^b, except we feel our hearts thus affected; so as to condemn the fault, grieve for the offence given to God, and resolve to amend.

But why must the *beasts* be destroyed? why the other creatures, which had done no evil? why should they suffer for our sakes, and be destroyed with man?—Even because they were made for the use of man, but man for the service of God.—When man ceases to pay his homage to his sovereign Lord and Maker, he forfeits the service of the animal creation.—As they are made for him, it stands to reason they should perish with him.

In the character of *Noah*

8. *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.* we learn what the virtues are, that will recommend us

9. *These are the genera-* to the grace and favour of

^b *Acts* xx. 21.

tions of Noah: Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

10. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

God; to wit, justice, integrity, and the fear of God, or true religion.—Noah is the first we read of, that hath the title of *just* given him, and that too by God himself: It behoves us, therefore, to understand aright what this justice imports, which God commends in the character of *Noah*, and consequently requires in us all.—In the first place, it is not that justice, which the heathen moralists have made one of their four cardinal virtues; neither does it exclude it. Scriptural justice is a more extensive character, and always includes that justice which we owe to GOD, as well as to man.—And this our excellent church, more happily than any other, expresses by the word **RIGHTEOUSNESS**; and St. *Paul* defines it, “The righteousness of Godⁱ,” *i. e.* (according to the *Hebrew* way of speaking) The Divine Righteousness. And in another place, “the Righteousness of God which is by faith;” that is, the Christian Righteousness; in opposition to mere moral justice.—In a word, it takes in both the tables of the law; yea, the Creed likewise. A man may be a strict observer of the two tables, as our deists and mere moralists pretend to be; yet if he throw off the Creed, his works without faith shall not be counted to him for righteousness. Nay, altho’ a man could truly say with St. *Paul*, “As touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless^k,” yet even this is “but loss and dung without the knowledge of *Christ Jesus* our Lord.”—In this threefold justice, of morality, piety, and faith, consists that righteousness, which alone can denominate us *just* before God.—Note we also, that herein lies that **PERFECTION** (the second part of *Noah*’s character) which is so often commended in Scripture,

ⁱ *R* m. iii. 21, 22, and chap ix. 30.

^k *Phil.* iii.

and so much talked of now-a days, but, alas! so little understood, and less practised!—The above ingredients must all concur to constitute the true and genuine perfection. But, withal, we are to observe, that it is a state, rather than an infused act; a relative, rather than an inherent instantaneous holiness: A state, which tho' right in the kind, yet admits of degrees; and consequently holds proportion with our growth in grace. If our graces of virtue, piety, and faith, increase, so will our perfection: As there are babes in Christ; so some are said to be "no more children, but that they are come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!"—Nevertheless, our best estate, and tallest growth, in this world, is still imperfect, because our graces are so; until they are consummated in glory.—Then, and then only, are the spirits of *just* men made *perfect*; that is, absolutely and indefectibly so.—In the mean time, to flatter ourselves, or others, with any higher notions of perfection, or any other sort than what takes in the above-mentioned constituent parts, of moral justice, as well as piety and faith; or not to attend to its several stages and degrees; is a most dangerous delusion, as it leads the unwary either to presumption or despair; betraying those who are of bolder spirits, into spiritual pride; and discouraging such as are feeble-minded and weak: In both, it nips grace in the bud; and puts a stop to any further growth and progress in the true Christian perfection.

The third part of *Noah's* character is, That *he walked with God*. This was said before of *Enoch*^m; and denotes that general and habitual course of religion and piety which he led; not only in preaching righteousness to the old world, but practising it on every occasion in his own life and conversation; as

¹ *Eph.* iv. 13.^m *Gm.* v. 22.

a light and example, as well as an instructor to others. In a word, it denotes that uniform obedience, which we all promise in our holy vow in Baptism, and almost in the same words, the keeping God's holy will and commandments, and *walking* in the same all the days of our life.

It is further said of *Noah*, That he was *perfect in his generations*:—This suggests another degree of perfection, which, in these our evil days, we are more particularly called to:—When religion is in vogue, and virtue encouraged and flourishing (as it was in the first ages of the Christian church), it is an easy thing to practise both, because it would be unseemly and unfashionable to do otherwise. But for a man to preserve his integrity in corrupt and degenerate times; to stand singular, and by himself, in piety and virtue; steady and zealous in duty, in the midst of a world universally depraved, among so many bad examples; yea, so many scoffs and threats, and malice of the rest of mankind; is a great thing, and a degree of perfection of uncommon difficulty.—This the fathers take notice of, as adding a more than ordinary lustre to the character of *Noah*, that he was a *just*, and even a *perfect* man, in a crooked and perverse generation.—At the same time, from the smallness of *Noah's* family before the flood, we cannot well overlook this further observation; how little desirable a numerous offspring is in times of universal corruption.—*Noah*, tho' six hundred years old, tho' a *just* man, and beloved of God, had but *three sons*, and each of them childless:—Nay, one of these proved afterwards wicked, and a grief to his father. It was a mercy, in such perilous times, that he had so few, and that he had not the discomfort to have any of his own children or descendants (as he might have had great numbers in so many hundred years) involved in the general calamity, and destroyed with the rest of the world.

When

11. *The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence.*

12. *And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.*

13. *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

is the salt of the soul, which preserves it from corruption; and religion and virtue the pillars of the Lord, on which he hath set the worldⁿ. When these fail, it must needs be, that the earth, with all the things therein, will sink into ruin: For to what end should the state of the world be kept up, when the *earth* is so totally corrupted, that the very church, for whose sake it was created, and hitherto upholden, shall have lost all faith, and fear of God? What then are the secret corrupters, or open enemies of faith, doing, but pulling down destruction upon their own heads, and hastening on the great and terrible day of the Lord?

14. *Make thee an ark of gopher-wood: rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.*

15. *And this is the fa-*

-When faith faileth upon earth, we may then expect its dissolution, and that the final judgment is nigh at hand. When but one *Noah* was left in the old world, and one *Lot* in *Sodom*, then came vengeance upon the ungodly; so may we presume, the like will happen to the present world.—This our Lord seems to intimate to us, by that saying of his, “When the Son of man cometh” [that is, to judgment], “shall he find faith upon the earth?” Faith

One family only of all the families of the earth, remained untainted with the general plague of sin; *Noah*, and his house.—To save him and the very small flock, to which the household of faith was now re-

ⁿ 1 Sam. ii. 8.

tion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

17. And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

18. But with thee will I establish my covenant: and thou shalt come into the ark; thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with thee.

19. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee: they shall be male and female.

20. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creep-

duced, God is pleased to provide an extraordinary means of escape. So careful is our heavenly Father, that not one grain of his good corn, one good man, be lost in the midst of the most general visitation: *An ark of wood* is built for their preservation, by the hands of *Noah*, but from a plan designed of God, and executed by the sole skill and direction of the Almighty.—Herein we have a plain emblem, and the first we meet with in Scripture, of the church visible upon earth; in which alone we can be saved:—From the pattern of the ark, its construction, dimensions, and use, we are likewise taught the unity and uniformity, as well as the divine original and institution of the church, and also the necessity of our being admitted into it, in order to our preservation and salvation.—No church but that which *Christ* hath modelled and designed; no building but that which hath been raised and finished according to that pattern, by the hands and instruments which he

° St. *Austin* illustrates this allegory very largely, *de Civit Dei*, Lib. 15.

ing thing of the earth after his kind: two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

21. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

22. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

commissioned and employed (such as *Noah*, under the state of natural religion; such as *Moses*, under the law; and such as *Christ*, and his apostles, under the gospel); shall be able to save us from perishing with this present evil world; and convey us safe (as the ark did *Noah*, and his family) to the new heaven, and the new earth, whereindwelleth righteousness.

With thee will I establish my covenant, saith God to *Noah*.—This, according to the letter, is easy to understand; but in the application is neither understood, nor so well attended to, as it deserves.—This transaction between God and *Noah* is of infinite concern to the interest of all mankind, being no less than a renewal of that covenant of grace and mercy, which God was pleased to make with *Adam* soon after his fall:—But *Adam's* immediate descendants having so notoriously, and so generally, rebelled, and violated that sacred treaty of peace, and now lying under sentence of a general excision for the breach thereof; it might be thought, that that covenant, with all the benefits and privileges consigned thereby, was now to be abrogated, and quite annulled.—To obviate such apprehensions, and allay their fears, God takes this occasion to renew and confirm the grant to *Noah*, as to a second *Adam*, a second head of mankind, and, in him, to all the human race to the end of the world.—At the same time it is of use to observe, That altho' this be the first place, where the express mention of a *covenant* occurs in the holy Scriptures, yet, from the form of the words here used, it may appear that it subsisted, and was in being, before; therefore not now first made, or first

known. It is not said, A covenant, but *My covenant will I establish with thee*. Which plainly refers to the same covenant, which God had formerly made with *Adam*; being as much as to say, “I do not revoke my covenant made with *Adam*, notwithstanding it hath, on man’s part, been so grievously infringed; but I *establish* and confirm it to thee, and to all that shall descend from thee.”—This declaration of God, and his solemn renewal of the second covenant to *Noah*, and his posterity, contains not only an unspeakable comfort, but suggests instructions of infinite use and importance, whether we consider it, First, With respect to the person here speaking; or, Secondly, With respect to *Noah*, and his family, here spoken to; for it leads us to, and unfolds some of the very chief principles of the doctrine of Christ, as well as the institutions of his church; together with the inestimable benefits and blessings, which are thereby entail’d on all mankind.

First, As to the person speaking, it is no other than the *Messiah*, or Son of God:—The same, who first made the gracious covenant of peace with *Adam*, renews it here to *Noah*. That this was Christ, hath already been proved: And his calling it here *his* covenant [*My covenant will I establish*] shews plainly, that this was not the FIRST, but the SECOND covenant; not the covenant of works, but that of grace and mercy, by which we are now saved, even the gospel of peace, and grand charter of our salvation; for, strictly and properly speaking, this is the covenant of God the SON; whereas the first was that of God the FATHER, being founded in the nature and essential properties of God and man, and their mutual relation to each other; of GOD, as Creator, and Sovereign Lord; of MAN, as a dependent creature; whereas the second covenant is solely founded on the free grace and mere mercy of God towards fallen man, that is to say, on the mediatorial scheme of our redemption by *Jesus Christ*: So that here, and where-
ever

ever else in Scripture, we find it called the Lord's covenant, or, as the LORD here styles it, *My covenant*, it has an immediate reference to God the SON, as the Author and Mediator of this *better* covenant (for so the apostle^p justly calls it, in comparison of the first), which brought life and immortality to light.

Secondly, The person spoken to was *Noah*; but not in his private capacity only, for that had been done before, when he entred into the communion of the faithful (and so the words here spoken answer to the ordinance we now call CONFIRMATION); but in his public character, as a second *Adam*, the head and representative of all mankind, and so the type and figure of *Christ*, the new man, who was to restore that life to the world, which had been lost by the first. In consequence hereof, *Noah* is appointed the depositary of the second covenant, whereby the grant of reconciliation is conveyed and secured to him, and his posterity: In which respect he became also a type of the clergy and ministers of Christ, to whose custody the sacred covenant is committed, both for the saving of their own souls, and the souls of others; even as he was commissioned to build the ark, which was to preserve both himself, and his family.

Thirdly, That the benefit of this act of grace, thus renewed and confirmed, was to extend to his posterity, appears evident, first, by God's admitting his whole family into the ark, and thereby preserving their lives; and next, as it were, to prevent any doubt of the divine favour to his whole posterity, the clause of preservation is afterwards enlarged to "him and his sons, and his seed after him^q". Wherefore, as the grant is general, and without any limitation or reservation whatsoever, except what necessarily results from the nature of the covenant itself; that is, the terms and conditions on our part; and

^p Heb. viii. 6.^q Gen. viii.

as God has likewise, under the gospel, declared, That he would have ALL men to be saved^r; the miscarriage of no one soul can justly be imputed to him: On his part of the covenant, he has never failed, nor ever will; the default lies wholly on the side of man. Some, when the holy covenant is offered to them, reject it, and so forsake their own mercy; others enter into it, but neglect the terms; such as these forfeit their right and title to all the benefits of it: As for those, who never had the opportunity of hearing it proposed, even they perish by their own fault; for they are not excluded from all share of the divine goodness, in certain cases. Consequently, to charge the final loss of any man on any secret decrees or exceptions on God's part, must not only be groundless, but highly impious, and a profane impeachment of the veracity, as well as goodness of God, who has here, to our common ancestor, and in a thousand other places of his holy word, published his act of grace and good-will unto men, in the most unlimited and comprehensive terms; so that he will ever stand justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged.

A window shalt thou make to the ark, &c.^s] So our *English*, and most other versions render it. But it seems probable, from Mr. Parker's remark on the place, that what we translate *window*, is not to be understood of a common window, for letting in of light into the ark; or to be opened or shut, as occasion should require; but rather, a certain luminous substance, which was to be hung up in the midst of the ark, in order to enlighten the same, both by night and day. Some think it was a carbuncle, or some other *noctiluca*, or night-shining jewel; others suppose it, a factitious, self-shining composition (called *Tzobar*) which God ordered and directed *Noah* to make of a cubit diameter, and to place it *above*; i. e.

^r 1 Tim. ii. 4.

^s Gen. vi. 16.

we may suppose, in the cieling of the ark. So the original seems to import; *Tzobar shalt thou make for the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above.* So that we may conceive it to have been some wonderful and divine contrivance for giving light to the ark, which otherwise must have been wholly dark, and without the benefit and comfort of light during, at least, the whole time of the rains descending: For tho', by our translation, it may seem, to common readers, that the *window* here so called, and that which is mentioned chap. viii. ver. 6. were of the same kind, and only differently placed; yet the quite different words by which they are called in the *Hebrew*^t, do plainly shew, that they are neither the same, nor mean the same thing: Nor may we suppose, that one window, placed in the top of the ark, could admit air or light sufficient into the ark, during the time of the deluge, especially as the orifice must have been closed up all the time the rain lasted.

Much more might be said; but, referring the curious reader to Mr. *Parker's* above-mentioned annotation, we may draw the following more useful reflections.

As we have observed the singular care, which God hath taken to build his church, and erect his sanctuary among men (of which the ark was a remarkable type); so may we also observe, that he hath always given it a sufficient light, to conduct it thro' the world to its appointed place of rest. While it was in its state of infancy, and contained within the *ark*, that state being a dispensation of natural religion, the light of nature, whereby it was then enlightened, was represented by the *Tzobar*. This luminous substance, which man had some hand in forming and disposing, but not without the direction and efficiency of God, is a lively emblem of that light of natural reason, which he hath given us to cultivate and

^t *Tzobar* and *Hallon*.

improve, for the benefit of ourselves and others, especially in the great concerns of religion. It is by this light we may say, that *Christ*, who is the true *Izohar*, "lighteth every man that cometh into the "world";" and that this light, which even the *Gentiles* had, was sufficient to have led them to the knowledge of the true God; and, by the visible works of the creation, "to understand his eternal power "and Godhead," as is affirmed by *St. Paul* ^w. They therefore that use not this light of reason, to the great ends for which it was given them, namely, the glory of God, and the good of themselves and others, do sin not only against him, but against their own nature, and the noble privilege which heaven has bestowed upon them.

The second light which God gave to his church, was revelation: By this light, his word and will have been made known to us in the holy Scriptures; the religion of nature commenced revealed; and the lesser light of natural reason was not extinguished by, but absorpt in, revelation.—This further light was typified to us by the *Shechinah* in the tabernacle, and by that bright cloud by day, and pillar of fire by night, which conducted the *Israelites* thro' the wilderness.

The third light was the gospel, or Christian religion: And this is represented by that noblest and brightest of all the heavenly luminaries, the sun; *Christ* himself, who is therefore stiled the Sun of righteousness, having now arisen on his church, with healing in his wings. This is the light that constitutes our present day; this is the day, which *Abraham* saw afar off, and was glad; this is the day which the Lord hath made, and we enjoy; with what transport of gratitude ought we to be glad and rejoice therein!

^u *John* i. 9

^w *Rom.* i. 20.

The last and most perfect light of all will be that of glory, which shall never set, nor ever change. But this light none shall ever behold, who neglect the use of those lesser lights; who advance not gradually from reason to revelation, from revelation to faith, from faith to glory. This is the order which God hath appointed; this the method, by which our Lord hath brought life and immortality to light.— Miserable therefore are they, and in dead things is their hope, who go about to invert this divine order of heavenly light, which, by such regular advances, hath at length shined forth unto a perfect day; who magnify reason above revelation and faith; or who oppose reason to revelation, or faith to reason.—The first sort are called rationalists; but forasmuch as they deny the word and revealed will of God, they in effect deny Him, and are in truth atheists.—Those who pretend to believe the Scriptures, and yet reject the mysteries of our holy religion, are in fact infidels, because they deny the faith, which was once delivered to the saints.—They who extol faith to the exclusion of reason, in matters of religion, as the *Romanists* do, do thereby obscure the light of revelation, and blind the eye of reason.—To these may be added, our modern enthusiasts, who resolve not only reason, but revelation also, into a strong and confident faith; yea, into certain imaginary impulses, and inward sensations, which they call the motions of the Holy Spirit, or light within, and to which they wholly give themselves up, in opposition to all the convictions of Scripture, or common sense, which happen to contradict their favourite opinions.—But the true man of God receives all these lights with great thankfulness and joy, as a lantern to his feet, and a light unto his paths: He accepts them as the best of gifts from the Father of lights; and uses them all in their proper order, and respective degrees, to the glory of God, and his own and others benefit.— As to the mere carnal man, he subjects his reason wholly

wholly to the illusions of sense, and walks on still in darkness; but the wise believer submits his reason only to faith, and so brightens its natural light by the surer and more lucid beams of divine truth.— Revelation shews him the great and sublime objects, which are necessary to be known, in order to secure his present and future happiness; and faith and reason are the two eyes, wherewith he discerns, and chooses, and pursues the way that leads thereto. Hence it is, that all those who rightly use these glorious lights, are styled by our Lord, “The children of light.”





*The Sunday called QUINQUAGESIMA;
or, The next Sunday before LENT.*

Proper Lessons for { M. P. *Genesis*, Ch. ix. to ver. 20.
E. P. ——— Ch. xii.

P R E F A C E.

THE Third qualification, preparatory to the exercise of true repentance, is to know how, and in what manner, we are to repent: And this the church teaches us in her lessons, and other Scriptures, appointed for this day's service, by setting before us the five following means:

First, A stedfast faith in God's mercy, through Christ.—Without this there can be no hope of pardon; and without hopes of pardon, repentance will be counted fruitless and vain.—This faith, and hope of forgiveness, is therefore inculcated to us in both our lessons. In the morning lesson, God establishes his covenant with Noah, as the common father, and head of MANKIND; not only conferring a blessing on him, and his posterity [Be fruitful, and multiply], but extending the benefit to all flesh in general; and promising never to destroy the world any more with an inundation of waters.—In confirmation of this promise, he institutes the rainbow to be a sign of this gracious covenant, and the pledge of his mercy, to all succeeding generations.

In

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In the evening lesson^a he is pleased to renew the covenant of grace, in a more especial manner, with Abraham, as father of the FAITHFUL; assuring him, That the Messiah, the promised Saviour of the world, should descend from him; and that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.

Secondly, A sincere charity towards our neighbour. This second requisite to true repentance is founded on that law of God, given to Noah, "That no man should kill or murder another."—And in order to preserve mankind from the least tendency to cruelty, or any approaches towards murder, the eating of blood with the flesh is streightly forbidden; that so, by abstaining from the blood of beasts, they might keep at a much greater distance from shedding the blood of a brother.

The genuine marks and qualities of true charity are set forth in the epistle for this day^b; the church (as Dr. Stanhope observes) most seasonably placing the description of it in the front of Lent, "to prevent mens deluding their souls with the severities of that holy season; as if these, though ever so pompous and austere, would avail, when destitute of a true and sincere charity."—And, that charity is an indispensable condition of true repentance, appears from our Lord's positive declaration;—"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses^c."

Thirdly, The practice of mortification, and self-denial. This is a third means proper to assist and perfect a true repentance. It was even enjoined before the fall, by that command of God to Adam in Paradise [Thou shalt NOT eat of the fruit, &c.]; and was given of God as a fence to the law^d, and a preservative from sin.—Here, again, in the law delivered to Noah—[Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat]. The like abstinence is required of all true penitents,

^a Chapter xii. ^b 1 Cor. xiii. ^c Mat. vi. 15. ^d Sepi-

mentum legis, as the Jewish doctors call it.

as an instance of that self-denial, which is proper to express and testify a true remorse, and hearty repentance, for sin committed.

It is likewise recommended to us by the example of Abraham, in the evening lesson, who, at God's command, quitted his native country, his kindred and friends, to sojourn in a strange land; which yet himself was not to enjoy, but as a pilgrim and wanderer; nor even his posterity to take possession of, till several hundred years after*.

But, above all, the duty of mortification is recommended to us by the example of our blessed Saviour in the gospel for the day†; where he foretels his disciples, as they were in the way to Jerusalem, the many indignities and sufferings, which should befall him there. — “ And
“ what (as Dr. Stanhope notes) could be more to the
“ purpose of our present devotions, or better dispose us for
“ repentance, than for the church to put us now in mind
“ of what our dear Redeemer suffered for our sins? — The
“ fast draws on, in which our sinful souls are to be hum-
“ bled before God: — It is in virtue of his death alone
“ that we can hope for pardon: Those humiliations he
“ endured, are to oblige every disciple of his to die to the
“ world, in conformity to his death, and to crucify every
“ affection and lust. — Our great Example kept his death
“ constantly in view; and they who imitate him as they
“ ought, will live in perpetual prospect of, and prepa-
“ ration for, their own. — And if such meditations pro-
“ voke our zeal, without remorse to execute the duties of
“ the approaching season; that is, by abstinence, and

* See Chrysostom, Hom. 31. who magnifies this act of self-denying obedience in Abraham. — *Iustus ille, cum de terra in terram vocaretur, tantam præ se tulit obedientiam, ut neque senectus, neque alia quæ annumeravimus præpedimenta, neque temporum difficultas, neque ulla alia, quæ remorari eum posse videbantur, ad obediendum tardiores facere potuerint; sed omnibus vinculis ruptis cum uxore, & fratris filio, & famulis, ut persiceret opere, quod sibi a Deo demandatum erat, cucurrit & festinavit senex, quasi juvenis resumptis viribus.*

† Luke xviii.

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“ mortification, and true repentance, to kill the old man,
 “ and utterly to abolish the whole body of sin; as by that
 “ means we shall now be partakers of his death, we shall
 “ also, hereafter, be partakers of his resurrection.”

The fourth and fifth requisites to a true repentance, are humility and prayer: And how necessary and effectual for obtaining the benefits of repentance, humility, and fervent prayer, are, is well represented to us in the history^e, which the gospel of this day gives us, of the blind man that was sitting by the way-side begging; who cried aloud to Jesus, as he passed by, to restore him to his sight. — Now true humility is a sense of our spiritual wants and poverty. — Had we as quick a sense of our defects and misery, as the poor blind man had of his want of sight, we should not only seek to God for relief, but pray with a fervency not to be silenced by any worldly shame, or discouragements: Nor should we cease the great work of repentance, until we found our souls restored to a perfect state of health and salvation.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS IX. to Verse 20.

The C O N T E N T S.

Noah and his children are blessed. Flesh of animals allowed for food; but blood, and murder, forbidden. — The covenant renewed; with a promise never to destroy the world again by a flood. — This is confirmed by a visible sign of the rainbow appearing in the cloud. — The earth re-peopled by Noah's three sons.

1. **A**ND God blessed Noah and his sons, **A**Lmighty God, having accepted the sacrifice and said unto them, Be which Noah had offered

^e Luke xviii. 35.

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fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. to him^k after the flood, was graciously pleased, in token of his reconciliation

and favour, to confer on him, and his sons, the same blessing, wherewith he had blessed *Adam*; saying, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*; that is, fill the earth again with inhabitants, which hath been desolated by the late flood.—Thus *Noah* was become the seed of mankind, the new root of human nature, and a second *Adam*.—In this respect, likewise, a type of the Son of God, who came to restore lost mankind; to renew the face of the earth; and to be the Father of a future [and better] world, as the prophet stiles him, *Isaiab ix. 6*ⁱ.

Man, by his rebellion against his Maker, had forfeited the dominion, which was given him at first over the other creatures.—Here God is pleased to restore it again, and to renew the charter of man's sovereignty over the animal world.—

2. *And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.*

—In order to this, and to secure it to him, as well as to provide for his safeguard against wild beasts, the Lord promises to impress on the whole brutal species a *fear*, and a *dread*, of man.—In virtue of which divine grant it is, that beasts of prey, and of the savage kind, are restrained from hurting us; and others (the tame beasts) are made to serve us for divers uses; to defend, to cloathe, to feed us.—And shall all these creatures thus fear, yea, thus serve, thee, O man; and wilt thou not serve, and love, thy most gracious, and bountiful Lord, who hath thus put them in subjection under thy feet?—Lord! What is man, that thou art thus mindful of him!

^k Chap. viii. 21.

ⁱ According to the *Greek* version.

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What is man, that can be so unmindful of Thee! Alas! so degenerated from reason, which is the image of thy wisdom; so fallen from humanity itself, which is the image of thy goodness, are we, as not only to become like the horse and mule, which have no understanding, but even like lions and bears, fierce and furious towards each other.

3. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things:*

4. *But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat.*

As formerly God gave man herbage for food (Ch. iii. 18.), he now grants him a liberty to eat all kind of flesh that is proper for nourishment; excepting only, that which has the *blood*, or life in it; which is not only in itself a gross and noxious food, improper for

the nourishment of the body, especially if eaten raw^k; but borders so much upon the savage nature of wild beasts as to be wholly inconsistent with those gentle, tender, and benevolent affections, which constitute the human character; and ought to distinguish man from the brutes.—And as this command of abstaining from *blood*, is designed to banish from mankind, and wholly extinguish that cruelty, which had filled the earth with violence before the flood, and drew down that universal judgment on the world of the ungodly; so is it intended to excite true piety and religion, by keeping up, in all mankind, a constant and lively sense of the justice and displeasure of God against sin;

^k *Raw.*] This seems to be the immediate sense of those words in the text [*Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, you shall not eat.*] So likewise in *Exod. xix. 26.* “Ye shall not eat any thing WITH the blood.”—In some countries it has been a practice to draw a quantity of blood out of a living animal, for food; and in other places, to eat the flesh *raw*, or unprepared by fire. In this sense, this law seems perpetual, and still binding, even at this day. And this interpretation being admitted, there could be no dispute among Christians, about the lawfulness, or unlawfulness, of eating blood.

which

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which could be no otherwise propitiated, but by blood, even life for life; for, “without shedding of blood, there is no remission¹.” The blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, was to make a full and sufficient satisfaction for the sins of the world; but before his coming, the blood of beasts was accepted of God in sacrifice, as a type of that grand and plenary atonement: The blood of beasts, therefore, which is their *life* (their *anima*, which answers to the animal or vital life in man), being accepted in commutation and lieu of that life, which man, by his transgression, had forfeited to the divine justice, became a sacred thing, even the very ransom and purchase of the human soul; so that to devour it as beasts do, or to eat it as common food, must needs (before the coming of Christ) be very impious and profane; a sacrilegious abuse of a mystery, which was instituted for preserving in the minds of men that faith in a Redeemer, whereon depended their sole hope of pardon and salvation.

5. *And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man.*

6. *Who so sheddeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man^m.*

Death is now made the penalty of wilful murder, even life for life, blood for blood, as the only adequate satisfaction that can be made for the life of man, whether destroyed by man, or beast. —A provision also is made for securing peace, and mutual benevolence, amongst mankind, from the motives of fear and love; that so the fear of our own death, here

¹ Heb. ix. 22.

^m *In the image of God made He man.*] He, i. e. Christ, the Creator of man, made man in the image of *Elohim* (so the *Hebrew*); i. e. of the Three Divine Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: First, with respect to the *soul*, man was made in the *image*, or similitude, of the Holy Trinity: “Nothing (as St. *Bernard* saith)

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here made the sanction of this law against murder, may restrain us from all acts of violence; and the consideration of our common nature, and the endearing relation of brotherhood, but especially the divine image wherein we are formed, and the resemblance we bear to Almighty God, may the more forcibly engage us to the offices of love and charity.—Murder is not only a violation of all the laws and ties of human nature, but high treason against God. He that killeth man, *made in the image of God*, does attempt, what in him lies, to destroy even the Lord himself.

7. *And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.*

God bids increase: Who bids destroy? Who bids obstruct, or pervert, the ends of propagation, but he that is foe to God and man?

—We here see, that to the mercy of preservation, God is pleased to add the blessing of propagating, and increasing, our species.—His graces, and favours, never come alone; one is backed, or immediately succeeded, by another: “His mercies are renewed every morning.”—And shall not such goodness constrain us to obedience? Shall not such love win our love, and engage our gratitude?

“comes so near that perfect wisdom above, as the rational mind, which, by its three faculties of memory, understanding, and will, subsists in that inexplicable Trinity of the Divine Persons, as an *image* does in its original.”—Secondly, with respect to the *human nature*, man bears the image of God, as he consists of a soul and body, with a spirit uniting both. These three modes of subsisting constitute but one nature, one essence, one manhood: So that, although there be innumerable persons partaking of this manhood, yet the human nature is but one, individual nature.—The application of this similitude to the mystery of the Trinity obviates the pretended absurdity objected to this prime article of our Christian faith.

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8. *And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,*

God speaks not to *Noah* alone, but to his *sons with him*; i. e. to his sons also.

We are the sons and descendants of *Noah*: The promise, therefore, here made to them, is to us also, and to our children.

9. *And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;*

First, God renews, ratifies, and confirms, to *Noah*, and his posterity, the second covenant, which he had made before with *Adam*, immediately after his fall; even the covenant of grace, to assure us of pardon and peace in and through the Mediator; and to remove all fears of the penalty, for breach of the first; provided we lay hold of that second covenant, by faith in him.

10. *And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.*

11. *And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.*

12. *And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me, and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:*

In the next place, to obviate all apprehensions of a second deluge, God is pleased to add a clause to the general covenant, in favour not only of man, but of all the animal part of the creation, *That they shall not be destroyed any more by the waters of a flood*. And this covenant, thus renewed and enlarged, he establishes with man, on the behalf of himself, and of the creatures that came out of the ark; and executes the same in form, as his own act and deed; by his bow in the cloud setting, as it were, his hand and seal thereto.

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13. *I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth °.*

14. *And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud :*

15. *And I will remember my covenant, which is between me, and you, and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.*

16. *And the bow shall be in the cloud ; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.*

17. *And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.*

“ Let us look upon the
“ rainbow, and praise him
“ that made it : Very beau-
“ tiful it is in the brightness
“ thereof,” said the wise
man (*Ecclus. xlii. 11.*). But
how much more beautiful is
it to the eye of faith, which
contemplates the exceeding
great and precious promises
of that blessed covenant of
grace and mercy, whereof
it is the seal and token ! This
is the covenant, whereby
we are now saved, not only
from a deluge of waters, but
from eternal death : It is
the charter of all our privi-
leges and blessings ; the se-
curity of our present bene-
fits, and pledge of all our
future hopes : It extends to
this world, and the next ;
to the happiness of this life,
and of that which is to come.

This sacred covenant, we may observe, has had three seals set thereto at different times ; here the *rainbow* ; afterwards, *circumcision* ; and lastly, *baptism*. Its first

° *My covenant with you—and with every living creature that is with you ; &c.]* This covenant, consisting of two parts, the first in a special manner relating to man, as a renewal of the second covenant made with mankind in *Adam* ; and the other, as extending to *all* living creatures as well as man ; is therefore stiled by the author of the book of *Ecclus. chap. xliv. 18.* διαθήκαι αἰῶνος ; and by the *Latin* version, *Testamenta sæculi*, the covenants of the world, in the plural number, because they include all the inhabitants of the world, both man and beast, the rational and irrational part of the creation.

seal,

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seal, the *rainbow*, was affixed to it, when renewed to *Noah*; that of circumcision, when re-established with *Abraham*; the last, of baptism, by *Christ* himself, when he perfected, and fully executed, this divine instrument, in his own person.—The first denotes to us its most comprehensive latitude, extending its salutary and beneficent effects to every creature, as far as any creature is a capable object of the divine mercy;—from whence we may most assuredly conclude, that no man, much less any number of men, were excluded (as predestinarians hold) from the benefit of this heavenly act of grace; seeing the very animals, and every living creature of all flesh, that is upon the earth, nay, the very earth itself, are intitled thereto, according to their respective natures.—As they all shared in the curse, and suffered by the fall of man, they are now made partakers of his blessing, in virtue of this covenant of reconciliation.—For this reason it is, that this seal of the *rainbow* hath never been broken since, or destroyed; but remaineth to this day, and ever will remain, while the world standeth, as “a faithful witness in heaven^p,” that the “Lord
“pre-

^p Faithful witness in heaven.] *Pf. lxxxix. 37.* That the *Psalmist* means this of the *rainbow*, seems, methinks, very plain; because it was established by God's special appointment, to be a witness and token of his covenant (as here in our lesson); and yet no expositors that I meet with, have taken it in this sense; some expounding it of the *moon*; some of the *sun and the moon*; some of all the heavenly bodies [*aspectabilia omnia*]: But surely, to none of these belongs the title of faithful witness in heaven, so justly and properly, as to the *rainbow*, whose very and only use and design is to be a faithful and perpetual witness. The *Hebrew* also seems to determine it to this sense, *Vengedib bash shacac neeman, et testis in æthere fidelis*; not only as the conjunctive particle [*ve, et*] is here disjunctively used; making a distinction between this witness, and the *sun and moon*, in the preceding clauses; but also, as *Shacac* properly signifies, as *Buxtorf* informs us [*Nubes superior, tenuissima scilicet & subtilissima*]; that thin cloud, and the very region wherein the *rainbow* appears; and so the *Rev. Mr. Pyle* paraphrases this passage in our lesson; “The *rainbow*—appearing at certain times, by the sun's reflexion upon the thinner clouds, was appointed to be looked
“upon

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“ preserveth both man and beast⁹ ;” and that “ his
“ tender mercies are over all his works¹.”—And to
express this in the amplest and most conspicuous
manner, it still continues to appear, when the *Lord*
bringeth a cloud over the earth.—But although the
thick and dark cloud may seem to represent his anger,
and menace our sins with punishment, as it did the
old world before the flood ; yet his *bow*, which he sets
therein, is to assure us, that “ in the midst of judg-
“ ment he remembers² mercy ;” that he *still remembers*
the covenant which is between him and us, and every
living creature of all flesh, &c.—Its very form and
appearance, when we behold it, calls upon us, not
only with profound veneration to admire this glorious
phænomenon, and work of God (when it compasseth
the heaven about with a glorious circle³ ; yea, com-
passeth the earth also, with a loving embrace), but,
with the devoutest sentiments of gratitude and love,
to adore, and to praise, the goodness of the Most High,
whose hands have bended it, and set it there ; to re-
vere his judgments, and to trust in his mercy.

Epiphanius tells us, that
¶ 18. *And the sons of Noah* *Noah*, being now become
that went forth of the ark, universal lord and monarch
were Shem, and Ham, and of the earth, gave his three
Japheth: and Ham is the sons their several shares of
father of Canaan. this great inheritance, by

“ pledge, that God should never suffer them to thicken so far a-
“ gain, as to cause another general inundation.”—What further
confirms the sense, in which we have taken those words of the
Psalmist, is the *Greek* version of them, which has rendered it,
Ο μαρτυρῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ, the faithful witness in heaven, as our old
English translation renders it ; not a faithful witness, according to
our last version ; the particle *the* referring, plainly, to something
that was so called, and so distinguished, by a remarkable and noted
denomination of *THE witness in heaven* ; which, doubtless, must
allude to, and mean, the rainbow ; which is here instituted of God,
and set in the heaven, to be both a token, and a *witness*, of the
covenant between him and man.

⁹ *Psalms* xxxvi. 6.

¹ *Psalms* cxlv.

³ *Ecclesiastes* xlii. 12.

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lot: To *Shem* was assigned the greatest part of *Asia*; part of *Asia*, and all *Europe*, to *Japheth*; and *Africa* to *Ham*.—*Canaan*, the son of *Ham*, is here mentioned, for this most probable reason, because, *Moses* writing to the children of *Israel*, who were, by God's appointment, to dispossess the *Canaanites*, it was material, by the way, to describe *Ham*, by his son *Canaan*; that they, seeing how long before his seed had been accursed for his iniquity (see ver. 25.), might conceive the better hope of expelling them, and gaining the possession of their country.

19. *These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.*

We see then, that all mankind are of one blood and original; being descended of one common ancestor; and therefore are all brethren, and, as it were, but one family.—

This consideration shews, not only the reasonableness of that universal benevolence and humanity, which God, the Great Lord and Master of all, requires towards all men; but also the folly and injustice of that pride, which puffs up one man against another; and is so apt to affect pre-eminence, and to despise the poor; while all the difference, which makes any distinction between one man and another, is not founded in nature, but only in mere shew, and empty appearances.—Nobility of birth, and the advantages of riches and honour, which some men value themselves so much upon, are in truth of no other benefit, than as they afford a larger sphere, and better opportunities, of doing good, and serving others.—This is the only use, for which they are given by our common Master, and Supreme Disposer of all things.—To grow vain and proud of his gifts, is to abuse them; nay, is the highest ingratitude to our great Benefactor.—“The rich, and the poor, meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them both.”

—He is the author both of their being, and of their respective conditions; he made them to be all alike in the first, and to differ only in the latter; but therefore only made he them to differ in these external circumstances of life, that, all standing in need of the help of each other, all might, by the reciprocal offices of protection and service, not only employ their several talents for the common good of all, but be compelled to keep up a constant sense of their mutual relation to, and dependence upon, each other; and be convinced of the unavoidable necessity, as well as duty, of exercising all the relative and social duties of life one towards another; seeing we are all members of one body; and that he who serves another, is, in fact, doing good to himself.

To prove that all the nations of the world are of one common stock and original, it has been observed, by a late celebrated writer^u, that the grand principles

^u See the *Travels of Cyrus*, by *Ramsay*, on the mythology of the antients.—See also *Parker's* occasional annotation, vol. I. page 296. of his *Bibliotheca Biblica*; where he saith, “Notwithstanding the manifest corruptions of the original tradition, as it descended to the fathers of nations, the wisdom of Providence is most conspicuous, in preserving so much of it down from the beginning to this very day, as that all the nations, of whom we have any knowledge, should so wonderfully agree in many of the same rites and ceremonies of worshipping the Deity; besides certain customs and habits, of civil institution, in themselves indifferent; as by an enumeration of them, may be readily demonstrated; viz. First, The numbering by *decads*.—Secondly, The computing time by a cycle of *seven days*.—Thirdly, The sacredness of the *seventh* number, as also of the *triad*, and *tenth*; and the observing a *seventh day*, as holy.—Fourthly, The use of *sacrifices*, propitiatory, and eucharistical.—Fifthly, The consecration of *temples* and *altars*.—Sixthly, The institution of *sanctuaries*, and their privileges.—Seventhly, Separation of *tents*, and *first-fruits*, to the service of the altar.—Eighthly, Custom of worshipping the Deity discalceated, or bare-footed.—Ninthly, Abstinence of *husbands* from their wives before sacrifice.—Tenthly, The order of *priesthood*, and maintenance for it.—Eleventhly, Most of the *expiations* and *pollutions* mentioned by *Moses*, in use among all the famous nations.—Twelfthly, Universal tradition of *protoplasts* (first parents), *deluges*, &c.”

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of true religion, namely, the primitive perfection and innocence of man, his fall therefrom, and restoration by a Mediator, have been preserved by a wonderful concurrency of traditions, where-ever men have been spread over the earth; and this could not have been, had it not been derived from one common head, who instructed his children in these fundamental points.

Seeing then the wisdom of Providence hath preserved these great truths amongst all the most differing people of the earth, notwithstanding the innumerable fables and corruptions mingled therewith; how can we choose but assent to the gospel, which rather illustrates and explains those original verities, than proposes any new revelation concerning these points?—The coming of the promised Mediator in person reformed the errors which had crept in; but made no alteration in the nature or terms of the second covenant, which is grounded on those principles.—In a word, he brought that immortality again to light, which had been, before his coming, so strangely obscured:—Yea, how can we choose but adore that goodness of God, who brought us *Gentiles* out of such thick darkness into his marvellous light; at once reviving, and fulfilling, his covenant of grace? So that we may well say, with the *Psalmist*, “He sent
“redemption to his people; he hath commanded his
“covenant FOR EVER; holy and reverend is his
“Name”;” preserving for ever the substance of it, not only among his peculiar people, but even in the midst of the gross errors and ignorance of the *Gentile* world, till the time came that the *Sun of Righteousness* arose, to chase those clouds away.—Finally, how can we choose but hate and renounce those sins, which obstruct our interest in this covenant of mercy; and which our most holy church is, at this time, more especially calling upon us to forsake;

“ *Psalm cxi.*

and

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and in these her present lessons sets before us both the means, and salutary effects, of a sincere repentance.

*Supplemental annotation on the institution of the rainbow;
to be a token of the divine covenant.*

As faith is absolutely necessary to intitle us to the benefit of God's promises, and the only means, by which we can take hold of the covenant of grace, it is very observable, that, in condescension to our weakness, and to confirm the grounds of belief, that so our faith fail not, he did not leave mankind to his bare promise of mercy, when he renewed his covenant with *Noah, Abraham, &c.*; neither are succeeding generations, who are equally interested therein (but were not present at the making thereof), left to the sole authority of his written word, in this important and general concern. He added a sacramental sign, a visible and perpetual token, to be a standing pledge and assurance of his mercy, and to attest his promise; for which reason, we may presume, that by what the Scriptures call his *testimonies*, are meant such tokens and evident proofs as these: For, this we find has ever been the method, and ordinary way, of God, when he has either promised, or conferred on man, any considerable blessing, to confirm his word, and his gift, by the addition of some signs, and a visible testimony. Thus here, by the *rainbow*; at other times, by a *burning bush* *, a *furnace* †, a *fleece* ‡, the *cloud* ||, the *ark*, &c. and more especially, the two sacraments of the passover, and circumcision, to the *Jewish*, and of baptism, and the eucharist, to the *Christian*, church.

O the preventing goodness of divine grace; how condescending to the frailty and feebleness of our lapsed nature! Though obliged to live by faith, and not by sight, yet are we more apt to live by sense, than by faith; more affected by what we see with our bodily eyes, than what we read or hear; more touched with gross and carnal things, than with those of the Spirit. The sacraments then (which are the pledges and tokens of his covenant) are the remedies which his wisdom has provided for this our infirmity:—And shall our pride reject the helps, which our weakness stands so much in need of, for its cure and support? Shall we, like froward children, refuse or despise the assistance we want?—Shall God, the God of truth, even Truth itself, vouchsafe to oblige himself, by such sacred and visible memorials of mercy to us; and shall we think it unnecessary to accept the pledge, and receive the earnest, of his love? yea, reject the very means he has appointed for begetting and strengthening our faith; by which alone we can apprehend and favour the things of God?—What greater ingra-

* *Exod. iii. 2.* † *Gen. xv. 17.* ‡ *Judges vi.* || *Exod. xiv.*

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titute to such goodness, than this! What greater blindness to our duty, and our interest! while, on the other hand, how fixed and unalterable is Almighty God, in all his designments of grace towards us! "For this, saith he, is as the waters of *Noah* to me: "For as I have sworn, that the waters of *Noah* should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee: For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD, that hath mercy on thee *."

See *Milton*, lib. xi. ver. 865. 885. The rainbow described.

Parker's occasional annotation on the symbol of the rainbow, vol. i. page 264.

* *Isaiab* liv. 9.





*The Sunday called QUINQUAGESIMA;
or, The next Sunday before LENT.*

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xii.

The call of *Abram*: God bleſſeth him; promiſeth a numerous offspring; reneweth the ſecond covenant with him; and entails on his line the deſcent and birth of the *Meſſiah*. His travels to *Canaan*, &c.

1. **N**OW the LORD
had ſaid unto *A-*
bram, Get thee out of thy
country, and from thy kindred,
and from thy fathers houſe,
unto a land that I will ſhew
thee.

THE call, the ready
obedience and travels
of *Abram*, repreſent to us,
in a figure, the beginning,
the progreſs, the end, and
deſign, of the Chriſtian life.
—The beginning is a call
from God, by the preach-
ing of the word; the firſt act of turning to him is
repentance, or renouncing the world, the fleſh, and
the devil:—The world was already over-run with
idolatry; even *Abram*'s family was tainted therewith.
His getting him out from them, and forſaking the
idolatrous ſuperſtitious of the *Chaldees*, was a lively
emblem of our baptiſmal abrenunciation.—But the
country he was to remove to, and exchange for his
own,

own, is not here named : it is called, *A land which the Lord would shew him*.—And how well does this, in its spiritual meaning, represent to us the blessings of the second covenant (the covenant of grace and faith)! intimating to us, not only a present admission into the church, visible upon earth, with all its divine privileges of peace and adoption, but the reversion of an inheritance in heaven, a *land* not yet *shewn*, or visible; a land which the Lord, even our Lord Jesus Christ, *will shew* us; for so hath he promised.—He shews it now to our faith by his gospel, by his Spirit, and by his example: He goes before, and shews us the way; yea, he will be our guide unto death.—*Canaan*, to *Abram*, was the promised land; but it was not named to him at first, to make the fuller experiment and trial of his faith.—A genuine heroic piety regards more the will of God, than its own reward.

2. *And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.*

3. *And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

The literal sense is obvious and plain, and hath been long since verified, to the praise of God's goodness and truth:—Tho' *Abram* and his wife were then old, and never had, nor ever expected to have, any children; and tho', at last, they had but one son, *Isaac*; yet, how amazingly numerous hath their posterity proved! how

famously great hath the name of *Abraham* been, among all succeeding generations! not only the church and peculiar people of God [the *Jews*] descending from his line, but the desire of all nations, the promised Saviour of the world, in whom *all the families of the earth were to be blessed*, being of his seed according to the flesh.—Yea, moreover, *Abraham* is become the father of all the faithful throughout the world, not of the *Jews* only, but the *Gentiles* also: and all the

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benefits and blessings, here granted to him, are in him made over and conveyed to us, and every true believer: So that they who are heirs of his faith, are also heirs of the promises made to him.—Thus *Abraham* became a *great nation* indeed; *great* by his natural descendants, but much greater by those of grace, his spiritual seed, the Christian, catholic, universal church. And as he received this change of name (which signifies a *father of many nations*) at his entering into covenant with God; we may hence learn, that how great soever our names or families may be by our natural birth and extraction, the name we receive in baptism is infinitely greater; when we are made the children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. This is a prerogative that makes us truly *great*;—a *blessing*! that sets us not only above all the crosses and *curses*, but all the honours and dignities, of this poor sub-lunary world. And herein *all the families of the earth* may be *blessed* also, if they be adopted into this holy relation to *Abraham*, and made his children by faith: For, as an apostle speaks, “If ye be Christ’s,” then are ye *Abraham’s* seed, and heirs according to “the promise^a.”

4. So *Abram* departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him: and *Lot* went with him: and *Abram* was seventy and-five years old when he departed out of *Haran*.

5. And *Abram* took *Sarai* his wife, and *Lot* his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they

If, in the foregoing benediction of *Abram*, we observe the special PRIVILEGES and advantage of the second (or Christian) covenant; in this noble pattern of his ready obedience, we may as plainly see the OBLIGATIONS, which every Christian takes upon him, when he enters into this covenant of grace.—*Abram* departed, and forsook all, to

^a Gal. iii. 29.

had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.

follow his Lord and Master: So must we. He believed, *as the Lord had spoken unto him*: So must we, all the articles of our Christian faith.

—*He went forth to go, &c.*

actually set about, and immediately put in execution, what he was commanded to do; was obedient to the divine call, and faithful to perform what he undertook: So must we fulfil our solemn engagement, of keeping God's holy will and commandments, and walking in the same all the days of our life; never stopping (much less turning back again to those things we have renounced) till we arrive, as he did, in *Canaan*, the promised land, and lot of our inheritance.

Nor is it enough to go this heavenly journey singly and alone:—*Abram* took his wife, and *Lot* his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered: So must we endeavour to engage our families and relations, our friends and acquaintance, to accompany us in this holy expedition.—We read of no issue or children, which *Abram* or *Lot* had yet gotten, by natural generation; but of SOULS that they had gotten we read. These, no doubt, were their spiritual issue, the children of grace, whom they had converted from idolatry, and begotten anew unto God. For, if we may believe an antient Jewish tradition, “It had been the manner of the pious *Abram*, before he left *Haran*, at a tent, or house, near the entrance of the city, where he kept great hospitality, to invite those who went in, or came out of it, to accept of an entertainment; and to take that occasion to instil into his guests the principles of the true religion, and propagate the belief of the one supreme God; and constantly, when he set meat and drink before them, to bless the Lord and King of the world, and say, There is but One GOD, and I am his servant.”—Thus, we may presume, he got many souls; and this glorious

example of piety and zeal ought we likewise to follow: So shall we be true sons of *Abraham*.—Such winning of souls will “give us a place and a name, “better than of sons and of daughters.” And, “They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine “as the stars for ever and ever ^b.”

6. *And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.*

7. *And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.*

8. *And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the Name of the LORD.*

9. *And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.*

By these continued travels of the patriarch *Abram*, we see an example, and may learn the necessity, of going on to perfection:—It is not enough to leave *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, that is, the greatest human wisdom, and light of carnal reason (for so, in a figure, that place, whence he first departed, signifies ^c): it is not enough to renounce the vanities and corruptions of the world, that is, to repent, and forsake sin; but we must still *journey on*, even after our admission into the church, and a professed entrance on the Christian life.—In heaven only are our **MANSIONS**, or places of rest; so our Lord describes it, as an house, a father's house, our home, with many mansions in it, to rest and abide in ^d. But the church on earth, like *Abram's* journeyings in *Canaan*, or the *Israelites* in the wilderness, hath many stages; no sure abiding-place, no settled rest.—We must *pass through the land*, as *Abram*

^b *Isaiah* lvi. 5. *Dan.* xii. 3. See also *Jam.* v. 20. ^c *Ur*, in the *Chaldee* and *Hebrew*, signifies *light*. ^d See *John* xiv. 2.

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did ; not contenting ourselves with a bare profession of the true religion, but proceed from one degree to another, both in knowledge, and in all godliness of living.—*Abram's* first stage is the *place of Sichem*, which, signifying a *shoulder*, represents that patience and resolution, wherewith we are to bear the cross, and obey the commands of Christ.—His next remove is to the *plain of Moreh*, or, as the *Greek* renders it, unto *the Oak*, which is the emblem of strength, and of such confirmed habits of virtue, as we must all aspire after.—That we have great need of this holy fortitude, appears from what is immediately added, *The Canaanite was then in the land*. Our sojourning in this world is still among enemies : Temptations and troubles abide us where-ever we move.—*Abram's* next stage is a *mountain* : He had been some time in the *plain*, to teach us, as it were, that the first principles of the doctrine of Christ are plain and intelligible to the meanest capacity, if honest and sincere.—Hence he proceeds to the *mountain*, to the greater heights, and sublimer attainments, in the science and duties of Christianity.—Faith, like an eminence, or high hill, opens to the devout pilgrim a fuller prospect of divine truths, and the more exalted graces of his religion ; extends his views “ to see afar off,” and points out the way he is to take, in his further progress towards heaven.—From hence, we read, that *Abram journeyed on still, towards the south* ; still proceeded in this heavenly course. The *Greek* indeed renders it, *he pitched his tent* ; but this may intimate to us, not only that steady perseverance, and patient continuance in well-doing, which forms the character of the faithful Christian ; but denotes also that militant state, which his whole life is engaged in, and so aptly compared to, in his baptism.—As he is then listed Christ's soldier and servant ; so he is often

2 Pet. i. 9.

G 3

changing

changing his station and encampments, according to the word and command of his heavenly leader.

10. *And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.*

But a Christian is not to expect a constant flow of the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, when he professedly engages in the pursuit of a better.—We cannot have our heaven both here and hereafter. Even *Abram*, the friend of God, had no resting-place, no, not in *Canaan*, the very land of promise: He “sojourned even There, as in “a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with “*Isaac* and *Jacob*.”—And so must all that are heirs with him of the same promise, while they sojourn in the church upon earth, because the city we look for, hath foundations whose maker and builder is God^g, even the heavenly *Jerusalem*.—In the mean time, as trials after trials attended the pious *Abram*, so must we expect the same.—No sooner was he arrived in *Canaan*, but a *famine* is in the land, and drives him into *Egypt*, for bread. He had indeed set up an altar in *Canaan*, and taken possession of that land for GOD; but as for himself, he had no inheritance there, “no not so much as to set his foot on^h.” He was still a sojourner and pilgrim upon earth; he wanted even the very necessities of life for a time; and was obliged to remove to another strange country, to avoid a famine.—*Egypt*, in the Scripture, is the noted emblem of the world, and state of nature, as *Canaan* is of the church, and the state of grace. But the best of Christians, while they are in the body, are under the necessity of going into *Egypt* (that is, of conversing and having dealings with the world) for their temporal support, lest the famine overtake them.—And if the story, which an antient historian relates of *Abram*, be true; that one of his motives for

^f *Heb. xi. ver. 9.*

^g *Ibid. ver. 10.*

^h *Acts vii. 5.*

going into *Egypt* was, that he might inquire into their religion, and bring them to the knowledge of the true God; this is a noble example for every Christian to follow.—His grand view and intention, in every affair of life, should be to advance the glory and knowledge of God.

11. *And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon.*

12. *Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.*

13. *Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.*

What shall we say to this action of *Abram*? — By some, in the early age of the church (but they were heretics), this conduct of his has been censured, as a gross prevarication: But the primitive fathers, and especially *St. Augustine*, vindicate our patriarch from all imputation of blame or weakness in this proceeding. It is, doubtless, more becoming the Christian modesty, and that humble reverence which is due to the Scriptures, and the characters of good men mentioned therein, not to condemn what God has not expressly condemned, or no-

ted as a fault.—If it was a weakness in *Abram*, and defect of faith (as who is perfect, and sinneth not?); let it teach us to fear for ourselves, to watch and to pray, lest we also enter into temptation.—And if at any time, through frailty of the flesh, we happen to fall, let it also be an encouragement to us, that we shall not be cast away; that God is gracious, and overlooks our infirmities.—But be it considered likewise, that, at this time, *Abram* was, as it were, in the state of natural religion; he was not yet circumcised, nor yet professedly entered into covenant with God, as we are.—His fall therefore, if it was a fall, is no excuse for ours, when, in any article of

we shall happen to betray an unworthy fear, or use unlawful means for our escape.

14. *And it came to pass, that when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman, that she was very fair.*

15. *The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.*

did naturally contribute thereto.—Thus *Sarai* was yet fair, yea, very fair, though sixty-five years old; the beauties of her mind shone out, and gave a lustre to her countenance. This inward beauty was also a security, as well as ornament, to her person; so that the heart of her husband might safely trust in her; he knew her virtue was in no danger; at the same time he presumed her beauty might be a security to him, as a *sister*, though not under the character of *wife*.—One relation therefore she might own; but the other was judged more prudent to conceal:—So far reason might provide against an imminent danger; the rest he committed to God; and he was not disappointed of his hope.

16. *And he intreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels.*

the “fairest among woman^k.”—But as *Pharaoh*

Sarai was now about sixty-five years old, and yet a beauty!—It was, not only the immediate blessing of Providence, which lengthened the lives, and preserved the health, of the antient saints; but their temperance, and great plainness of diet, and especially those virtuous dispositions, and command over their passions, which

Sarai was a figure of the church; the church bearing the same relation to Christ, as *Sarai* did to *Abram*: For so Christ calls the church in his divine song, “My sister, “my spouseⁱ.”—And this spouse of Christ is fair, yea,

ⁱ Cant. iv. 10.

^k Chap. i. 14. and vi. 1.

loved *Sarai* for her outward beauty, so there are many excellencies and external advantages in religion, which even worldly men admire, and covet after. Yea, they often intreat those well, who belong to her, as *Pharaoh* did *Abram*; but they are ignorant, that the church is the SPOUSE of Christ, as well as his sister: The latter, as a mere natural relation, they have some apprehension of, and promise to themselves great profit and benefit, by taking her into their house; but they have no notion of her spiritual relation, as already espoused to Christ:—As soon as they know that, they let her go.—Whoso would be espoused to her, and keep her, must become one with Christ. By being united to her head, we are made one with her, and members of her body.

Hence we learn two things: First, That God's constant eye is over the righteous, to preserve and protect them in all dangers, which, of themselves, they are not able to escape: So *Sarai* was secured from all attempt upon her chastity, by the intervening hand of God.—And, Secondly, That he is ready to prevent our sin, if it proceed rather from ignorance, than wilfulness, and a criminal design.

We see here, that even barbarians, and nations that are strangers to revelation, have yet a natural sense of, and reverence for, modesty; and an abhorrence of the crime of adultery.—It is plain, that *Pharaoh* was shocked at the very thought of such a sin, and the danger he had been in of falling into it, though innocently and undesigned.

17. *And the LORD plagued Pharaoh, and his house, with great plagues, because of Sarai Abram's wife.*

18. *And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?*

19. *Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.*

Why

20. *And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.*

Why saidst thou, &c. He throws the blame on *Abram*, as not having rightly informed him concerning her; and then, *sends him away*, not only in safety, but with

his wife, and all that he had; yea, with a charge to his people, not to molest, but dismiss him in peace. Thus, "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him¹." Furthermore, we may observe, that this part of *Abram's* life was a kind of emblem, or prelude to what happened afterwards to his posterity. Their going down to *Egypt*, and being impelled thereto by a famine; their long detention there in *Pharaoh's house*, and a state of bondage; afterwards, their releasement, and dismissal thence with great wealth; were all prefigured in this history of their great ancestor.—There is likewise a moral we may draw from hence, of great use in our commerce with the world, and which may encourage good people to depend more on the protection of Providence, and to fear men less.—*Abram* suspected the *Egyptians*, as an abandoned people, capable of committing the most heinous crimes, murder and adultery. This put him upon concerting with his wife that scheme for his security. But he found more mercy, humanity, and virtue, among them, than he expected:—The religious part of mankind are not therefore to entertain too rigid an opinion of the rest of the world. There are in many wicked men such remains of honour, such veneration for sincere and apparent piety, as will not suffer them to injure a truly innocent man.—There is in innocence such a powerful charm, as to mollify often the hardest heart: But there is always in God such a power, as to curb or soften the most inveterate; that they shall not be able, though never so willing, to hurt his faithful servants.

¹ *Prov. xvi. 7.*



The First Sunday in L E N T.

Proper Lessons for { M. P. *Genesis*, Ch. xix. to Ver. 30.
E. P. ——— Ch. xxii.

P R E F A C E.

TH E church having hitherto set before us such select portions of Scripture, as were most proper to excite us to, and prepare us for, the duty and discipline of repentance; and upon Ashwednesday (the first day, and head^a, of the fast) having prescribed to us, in what words, and with what spirit, we may best express our penitential sorrow (the proper Psalms appointed for that day being the completest form, as their composer was the most perfect example of repentance, we any-where meet with in Scripture^b), she this day proceeds to enforce the necessity of a sincere conversion; by applying, in the most affecting manner, to those two main springs of all human actions, our hopes, and our fears.—The passion of fear she endeavours to awaken, by the representation of that amazing judgment which God inflicted on

^a *Caput jejunii*; so called by the antients.

^b The church hath appointed no special proper lessons for *Ashwednesday*; and, probably, for this reason, because the lessons for the three preceding Sundays are designedly chosen, as preparatory thereto. In this case, there wanted only an exhortatory introduction to her Communion-service, to call upon us to repentance; with proper *Psalms*, and forms of confession; and prayers, to express the same in the properest words, and most effectual manner.

the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, for their horrible wickedness and impenitency.—Our hopes and desires of mercy she quickens, and animates into a full assurance of pardon, by that lively emblem of our redemption, prefigured in the history of Abraham's offering up his only son; as related in our evening lesson.

And how proper, how seasonable, is this address, to the circumstance of penitents, now entering on the discipline of penance! For whereas, among those who are joined it at this time, some, through the hardness of their hearts, and the deceitfulness of sin, are yet in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; others, labouring under the terrors of an accusing, or too scrupulous conscience, are almost swallowed up of over-much sorrow; the Scriptures for this day, are, therefore, most admirably adapted to suit each of these cases: For what more effectual to melt the obdurate heart, than that dreadful scene of fire and brimstone, wherewith God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, and condemned them with an overthrow; making them an example unto those, that should live ungodly! and representing to them, in a figure, the dreadful scene of the last and terrible day of judgment! On the other hand, what more encouraging to raise the humble and contrite penitent, than the sure mercies of God, exhibited to us in the type, and since verified in the real passion of our dear Redeemer!

The flight of Lot out of Sodom is a precedent to all who profess to repent, that their first step must be, to forsake their former evil conversation; and the judgment, which befel his wife for looking back, is a warning to all that have begun well, that they turn not back to their own wickedness; nor so much as cast a look, or longing desire, towards the things they have renounced; lest they be condemned with the world.

The conflict of our Lord, and his triumph over the tempter, as related in the gospel for this day^c; and the many sharp, but still victorious trials of the holy apostle

^c Matthew iv.

St. Paul, enumerated in the epistle^a, are no less properly suited to the subject of this Sunday's meditation, and the case of all sincere penitents; especially if from thence we draw this encouraging remark, that, in our blessed Lord's conquest over Satan's temptations, we behold the accomplishment of that gracious promise made to the first Adam, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head;" that is, should defeat all his cunning. — And in the eminent and invincible firmness of St. Paul, against all the assaults, and fiery darts, of the devil, we have a standing monument, and most assured pledge, of the triumphs and trophies of divine grace vouchsafed to man. — Hereby we see, that although the tempter proved too hard for the first man, though endued with all the advantages of human nature, in its state of perfection, yet now even fallen man is, by the power of grace, become an overmatch for Satan — That we may therefore hope to be more than conquerors, through him that strengtheneth us, if so be we apply ourselves, especially at this time, to fight manfully under his banner, as his faithful soldiers; as true penitents.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xix. to Verse 30.

Lot entertaineth two angels. Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed. Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt, for her disobedience to the divine command.

1. **A**ND there came two angels to Sodom at even: and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them, rose up to meet **T**WO of those angels, which had appeared to Abraham, came on the evening of the same day, to Sodom: And Lot, as his

^a 2. Cor. vi.

them: and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground:

custom was (after the example of *Abraham*) to entertain strangers, was sitting in the gate of the town, in

expectation of some opportunity to exercise his hospitality. Seeing two persons approaching, whom, by their mien and appearance, he judged to be men of eminence, as well as strangers, he rose from his seat, to invite them to his house; knowing too well, how much exposed they would be to the unnatural outrage of his wicked neighbours, should they go into other houses, or remain in the streets: And, accosting them, with great civility and respect, even bowing himself *with his face to the ground*, he offered them the use and protection of his house.—Such was the benevolence, such the civility and good manners, of pious men, in the early ages of the world!

2. *And he said, Behold, now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servants house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay, but we will abide in the street all night.*

But the angels, that they might render this kind invitation of *Lot* a more memorable and shining instance of an humane and hospitable spirit to all posterity, seemed, at first, unwilling to accept of his obliging offer.—

3. *And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entred into his house: and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.*

But he pressed them so much the more: Their refusal made him redouble his importunity; because he apprehended the consequence of their abiding in the street all night, or even going into any other house. The ho-

nest and affectionate intreaty of the good man prevailed on them to accept of his invitation, and of the kind entertainment he made them of wine, and unleavened cakes.—Such was the temperance of those times!

times ! Bread and wine were then esteemed a *feast* : And the good man's haste, as well as heartiness, in preparing it, did much commend the welcome.

4. *But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter.*

But so universal a corruption of manners had overspread that whole city ; so barefaced, and even fashionable, was grown the practice of the most unnatural lusts ; that all ranks and degrees of men, as well the YOUNG, who were not yet arrived at the capacity of committing those monstrous crimes, as the *old*, who were past them, shewed an equal dissoluteness of manners.—*All the men of Sodom*, even the males of that city, without the least modesty, or sense of shame, flocked *from every quarter* of the town, on the same lewd and abominable design.

5. *And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night ? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.*

As these wretched *Sodomites* had fallen from God to idolatry, “ God had also “ given them up to un- “ cleanness, to dishonour “ their own bodies between “ themselves ; and, leaving “ the natural use of the wo- “ man, to burn in lust one towards another, men “ with men doing that which is unseemly” (as an apostle hath thought fit to describe it, *Rom. i. 23.*) ; therefore these abandoned sinners *called unto Lot, and said, &c.*—They were not ashamed to proclaim their own filthiness : And it may be presumed, the uncommon beauty which appeared in the angels, had inflamed their vile passion.

6. *And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him ;*

The brave old man was not afraid of their numbers, or strength ; he had too great regard for the sacred laws of hospitality, to be frightened

frighted by the madness of a multitude, and the most imminent personal danger, into a violation of duty.—Therefore, choosing to run the risque of being murdered before his own door, rather than give up his guests to their will, he *went out at the door unto them*, that he might modestly and calmly expostulate the matter with some of their chiefs, and endeavour to divert the violence that was intended.—He *shut the door after him*, that they might not force into the house; but, at the same time, he left himself no way of retreat from their fury.

He gave them good words, the better to dissuade them from their wickedness: He used intreaty; he called them *brethren*, but without

effect; it nothing moved these hardened miscreants:—Yet it shewed a prudent command over his own passions; and rendered his meekness towards his enemies as exemplary, as his generosity and courage on behalf of his friends. From both we may learn this useful lesson, that gentleness, and true fortitude, may well consist together, and lodge in the same breast; nay, that they are necessary ingredients of each other, and serve to complete the character of the truly virtuous man.—Courage, without meekness, will degenerate into rage; and mildness, without resolution, will sink into pusillanimity, and unmanly fears. The uniting of both together, is the best art to appease the unruly passions of others, and to bridle our own.—“A soft answer turneth away wrath;” and is generally the most home and effectual rebuke.

But what shall we say to this offer of his daughters? What, but that the virtue or discretion of the best of

8. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I

pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

men is not without its flaw.—It seemed doubtless to him a less sin, because less unnatural, rather to expose his daughters than his guests; even to give up his children to their mercy, than violate the sacred laws of hospitality, and betray those he had given his protection to.—But whatever allowances may be made for this good man (under the confusion he was in, the heat of his zeal, his great perplexity of mind, and living under the law and dictate of natural light), we Christians have a positive law given to us, “Not to do evil, that good may come^f”; nor yet to judge, or set at nought, a brother, when we see him overtaken in a fault.—Instead then of passing any hard censure on this part of *Lot*’s conduct, let us rather look to the bright side of his character; that inviolable fidelity to his trust; that generous love to strangers.—The very offer of his daughters, though in itself unwarrantable, was an apparent sacrifice of his own interest, to the greater obligations of honour; at least it shewed his inexpressible detestation of that monstrous crime, which was attempted to be committed on his guests.—An example this! to be admired; nay, to be imitated in the principle, or impulsive cause, though not in kind, or the manner of action.—At least, it is a loud call to us to pray earnestly, as our Lord hath taught us, that we may not be led into temptation:—Is also a caution, how we frame a judgment of other men, or of their actions^g.

The

^f *Rom. iii. 8.*

^g *St. Augustine* gives a most candid interpretation of this passage. “We are not, says he, to consider this offer of *Lot* to the inhabitants of *Sodom*, as an expedient arising from mature deliberation; but, on the contrary, we ought to look upon it as an expression dropped from a man in surprize, whose thoughts were confounded with the horror and apprehension of that injury

The best of men, are not without their failings; the worst may have some virtues.—Some actions may appear very criminal; and yet the heart, and the principle they flow from, be right in the sight of God; on the contrary, some may seem to be holy and good; and yet, in their root, be wicked, or unjust.

9. *And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: Now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door.*

that endeavours to reform them. So true is that saying of Solomon, “He that reproveth a scorner, getteth to himself shame; and he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth himself a blot^h.”

10. *But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door.*

11. *And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.*

of his angel, plucked us out of the Jaws of destruc-

“they were about to offer to his guests; and, consequently, we are “to regard it as a thing, by no means fit for our imitation.” Qu. on Gen N^o. 42.

^h Proverbs ix. 7, 8.

tion!

tion!—For such mercies received, though our gratitude may, and too often doth, fall short of its duty; yet his hand is never shortened, nor his ear heavy, that he cannot, or will not, save.—If we are of his people, and God be for us, who is he that can harm us!—A *Jeroboam's* arm shall be dried up, and wither, when stretched out against his prophetⁱ.—*Sodomites* and *Syrians* shall be smitten with blindness^k, if they seek to hurt his faithful servant. For “who hath resisted him and prospered? or, who ever trusted in him, and was confounded? or, did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken^l?”

How good must God be to his children, when, for their sakes, he spares even a *Sodomite*, that bears any relation to them!—Alliance with a righteous *Lot* gave a sufficient title to favour and protection.—Even *Lot* himself was remembered, and sent out of the midst of this overthrow, for the sake of faithful *Abraham*^m.—So great an honour hath God for all his saints!—So much more valuable an advantage is it to have an affinity or interest with his friends, than this vain world imagines!

12. *And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place.*

13. *For we will destroy this place; because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.*

But God is just, as well as kind:—The offer of escaping is made to none but the friends and family of righteous *Lot*; but they, through want of faith, lose the benefit of such a mercy.

ⁱ 1 Kings xiii. 4.

^k 2 Kings vi. 18.

^l Eccles. ii. 10.

^m Verse 29.

stroy this city: but he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.

His sons-in-law, tho' married to his daughters, and in virtue of that relation, might have been saved; yet, as

they had not espoused his virtues, or his faith, they perished with the ungodly, and shared the fate of those, whose example they chose to follow. By this we learn, that the merits of a saint may gain us some temporal indulgence; but will not, as the Papist fondly dreams, extend to the interests of the soul, and purchase a reprieve from eternal punishment.

“ For no man may deliver his brother [not his nearest
“ and dearest friend] from hell, nor make atonement
“ unto God for him; for it cost more to redeem their
“ souls [even the blood of the Son of GOD];
“ therefore he must let that alone for everⁿ. ”

15. *And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.*

16. *And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.*

St. Ambrose imputes the delay of Lot to his pious concern for his friends and relations, whom he had spent the night in persuading to consult their safety, and leave that wicked and devoted city; but all in vain. They took it all for madness and folly: So that now the day began to break; the day, which was to be their last, their day of doom.—The angels therefore hasten his departure; bid him think no further of other company; but shift for himself, and those that were with

him, with all possible speed.—Yet still, we see, he lingered; was loth to leave his friends behind, friends so nearly allied; and whom, possibly, he was still in-

ⁿ Psalm xlix.

terceding for; loth, perhaps, to leave his house, his goods, the place he had chosen for his residence, the fruitful and well-watered plains of *Jordan*, for a distant and desert mountain.—And is not this a lively emblem of our corrupt nature? Is not this the part we all act, and have so often acted, when bidden of God to forsake the *Sodom* of this world, and the filthy conversation of the wicked; the engagements of unlawful pleasures and profits, the lusts and corruptions of the flesh?—Have we not still *lingred*, still prolonged the time to renounce these dangerous and professed enemies of our souls; to forsake all, and to follow Christ?—But the *Lord is merciful*—in obliging us, by a sweet, but secret force, to do that by compulsion, which we ought to do by choice! For what are the afflictions and troubles, the crosses and disappointments, of all good men, but the kind hand of a *Merciful God*, to *bring them forth, and set them without the city of destruction*?—O gracious and benign force! O happy violence! where the cross is mercy, and the loss, gain!

17. *And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.*

Observe we here, that both the angels are employed in the deliverance of *Lot* and his family; but then the stile alters to a single person.—*He said, &c.* And who can this be, but the Angel of the covenant, the Son of God?—*Lot*, in the next verse, calls him, *My Lord*; and verse 19. he ascribes to him the mercy received; and prays his further grace and favour.—In verse 21. the same person speaks in the stile of God, *See I have accepted thee, &c.; I will not overthrow, &c.*; and verse 24. it is said, *The LORD rained—from the LORD out of heaven*; that is, as all primitive interpreters explain it, the LORD the Son, from the LORD the Father. Here we plainly see

a sameness of action in executing judgment (for “what the Father doth, that doth the Son likewise”); and also a sameness of Name [JEHOVAH]; for “there is but one LORD^p,” and therefore a sameness and unity of Essence; but withal, a manifest distinction of Person and Office; the Lord Christ (to whom “all judgment is committed^q”) raining down from the Lord his Father, out of heaven.—This seemed proper to observe on this place, and at this time, in order to confirm our faith in that prime and peculiarly fundamental article of the Christian creed, the Divinity of the Son of God.—It was the Saviour then of mankind, that sent *Lot* out of *Sodom*, and afterward destroyed that accursed city. Both these acts, of mercy and of judgment, do peculiarly belong to him. It is he that calls us to renounce the wicked world, and live; to *escape to the mountain*; yea, not to *look behind*, nor *stay in all the plain, lest we be consumed*.—No security for us but in the church; this is the mountain we are to flee unto: To stay in the plain, in the midst of affluence and plenty, pleasures and ease, is dangerous to our virtue; and to *look back* to those sins we had once escaped, and been purged from, shews a greater affection to them, than can be consistent with a state of grace.—These are lessons of great importance to us, and therefore so particularly recommended by our church at this season of Penitence and Self denial.

Origen here allegorizes

18. And *Lot* said unto them, O not so, my lord.

19. Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life: and I

thus; “*Lot* was not so perfect as of a sudden to ascend from *Sodom* up to the mountain: He was too good a man to perish with *Sodom*; and yet not good enough to continue with *Abraham*. Had he been

^o John v. 19.

^p Eph. iv. 5.

^q John v. 22.

“such,

cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die.

“such, he would not have chosen so wicked a place for his residence, nor been so unwilling to leave it:

“So that he walked in a middle path betwixt the “more perfect saint, and the dissolute sinner.”—He was conscious of his own inability to ascend to the mountain, and not insensible of the mercy which saved his life; but his faith was weak, and his obedience imperfect.—But let the Christian learn, that a True Repentance *lingers* not at the leaving the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, or forsaking the dearest friends we have, to follow Christ:—That our faith in him is the victory which overcometh the world; but it must be a faith in the power, as well as the goodness, of divine grace: That such a faith will plead no infirmities of the flesh, to excuse its ascent to the hill of perfection, being enabled to do all things through him who strengtheneth us:—That a sincere Obedience disputes not the will of God; sees no *mountains* or difficulties in any of his commands; for while we have Him for our strength, and his Spirit for our guide and assistant, what need we doubt our escape to the hills whence cometh our help? What *Evil* can take us, or how can we die, if *He* be with us, and his hand conduct us?—Let *Lot's* frailty fortify our weakness, and shame our want of faith and fortitude.

In the characters of *Lot* and *Abraham*, we may see what differing degrees of *Perfection* there are in religious persons. The Scripture bears testimony to each of them, that they were righteous; but the inequality betwixt them is too observable to admit of any parallel, or bear a comparison. And

20. Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Ob let me escape thither (is it not a little one?), and my soul shall live.

21. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not over-

throw the city for the which thou hast spoken.

22. *Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither: therefore the name of the city was called Zoar^r.*

what was the cause of so remarkable a disparity, but the very different measure of their faith?—*Lot* hesitates to go to the *mountain*, which he was bidden to flee to, although it were near, and even for the saving his own

life.—*Abraham* makes no difficulty to obey the divine command, when sent to a mountain three days journey off, and there to offer up the life of his son, his only son.—Nevertheless, *Lot* finds acceptance, because, tho' weak, he was yet sincere; though greatly distant from perfection, yet was he righteous. But then the blessing he received, fell as short of *Abraham's*, as did his faith and obedience:—*Lot* barely saved his life, and escaped like a brand plucked out of the fire: But *Abraham* is made the heir of the world, and the friend of God.—So that the examples of these two mark out to us the two extremes, and outmost bounds, of our spiritual race. He whose virtue exceeds not the virtue of *Lot*, is at best but a novice, and a babe in Christ; he that comes not up to it, is scarce good enough to be safe.—But the life and example of *Abraham* describe the summit of human virtue, and the highest degree of perfection, to which all Christians should aspire, though but few are able to attain.—Howbeit, where our endeavours are sincere, though short of so consummate a pitch, the indulgence that was shewn to the weakness of *Lot*, is an encouragement to ours, that we should not despair. If we cannot get to the *mountain*, it is something to fly from *Sodom*; to get as far as little *Zoar*, and out of the reach of danger.—But whoso stays in the *Sodom* of this world, which, in baptism, he had renounced, or even looks back, is in danger of being consumed.

^r *Zoar*]; i. e. *little*, as St. *Jerom* expounds it in his account of the *hebrew* names. The *Greek* version calls it *Segor*.

23. *The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.*

As the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* is a fearful emblem of the general conflagration at the last day; so the escape of *Lot* and his family to *Zoar* prefigures the safety and redemption of God's elect, when Christ cometh to judgment.—On little *Zoar* (the type of his church and little flock:—*Is it not a little one?*) he shall then arise, like the *sun upon the earth*, with comfortable light and healing in his wings.—But on the ungodly he shall (even according to the letter) “rain down fire and brimstone, storm and tempest, as he did upon *Sodom*; this shall be their portion to drink.”—Thus (as *Origen* speaks) shall it be at the great and dreadful day of the “consummation of the world: The righteous shall be first secured of their promised inheritance; a place of safety and rest; and then shall the wicked be cast together into the great furnace of eternal fire.”

24. *Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrab brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.*

We have been told before of a flood of waters¹, to drown the world of the ungodly; here we read of a shower of fire to destroy the wicked. Both these judgments (as it is usual with divine justice) carry an analogy to the crimes for which they were inflicted; a deluge of *water* to cleanse away the bloodshed and violence wherewith the earth was filled before the flood;—a torrent of *fire*, even fire with *brimstone*, to punish the unnatural lusts of *Sodom*; nay, to denote, as well as punish, the horrible stench, as well as guilt, of their crime.—God saved *Lot* out of the midst of the overthrow, to teach us not to despair of his mercy: He sends down hell from heaven (as *Salvian*² expresses it) on that ungodly

¹ Psalm xi. ² Chap. vi. ³ *Super impium populum gehennam misit e caelo.* Lib. i. pag. 28.

people, that we may not contemn his justice.—God is indeed a fire to all; but with this intrinsic difference; purifying, and like the refiner's fire, to the humble penitent; but destructive and consuming to the hardened and impenitent sinner.

25. *And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.*

What a dreadful change is here! The land of *Sodom* was before as the garden of the Lord, a mere paradise, for its exceeding pleasantness and fertility; but now a barren and frightful solitude; not the least footsteps of its former plenty;—nor grass nor trees, fields or houses, animal or vegetable, man or beast, to be seen!—And what the cause of such a change, but the curse of God? and what the cause of that curse, but sin?—Thus the pleasures of sin may, for a time, look fair and delightful, as the *plains of Sodom*, and tempt even a righteous *Lot* to yield to their delusive charms. But if we look back to the event of his mistaken choice^w, or look forward to the end and issue of our own, we shall ever find the fate of *Sodom* verified in ourselves, and nothing but emptiness and disappointment, barrenness and loss, destruction and unhappiness, whenever we prefer the most promising enjoyments of this present evil world to the real and enduring substance of heavenly felicity.

If *Lot's* imprudent choice
26. *But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*
of *Sodom*, for the place of his residence, admonish us of the folly and danger of any first engagements in sin; let the amazing fate which beset his *wife*, for looking back to that wicked place, warn us much more against any wilful relapse.—This is the reason of our Lord's command to all, that we should “remember *Lot's*

^w Gen. xiii. 10.

“wife;”

“wife^{*},” that is, so remember her punishment, as to avoid her crime.—As to the manner of this strange metamorphosis, and how a human body was turned into a *pillar of salt*, philosophy may inquire, and, perhaps, account for: But the cause of so wonderful a judgment, so extraordinary a change, is what concerns us most, and ought never to be forgotten.—Whatever her motive might be for looking back; whether it was her fright, and sudden surprize; or whether we impute it to some inordinate affection, and her hankering after the goods, or friends, she had left behind; or, perhaps, to a strong curiosity to see so terrible a scene; or else to a downright infidelity and doubting of the truth; it is certain her looking back was an act of disobedience, too plain to be excused; too bold and immediate a violation of the divine command, to escape unpunished.—But her punishment is our mercy, and a most instructive lesson:—She being dead, yet speaketh. For,

If we enter into the mystical sense of this history, many and useful are the reflections that arise from the consideration of *Lot's* conduct, and that of his *wife*.—Our Lord observes, in his remark on the natural frailty even of the good and the serious, that “the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”—Now *Lot* is the emblem of the first, his *wife* of the other; the spirit sets out well, moves right on, and looks forward to the place of refuge, to which we are commanded to go; but the flesh, though it follow for a time, is too apt to cast back, *from behind*, a longing eye to the world, and the sinful lusts it had renounced.—Again, we may say, *Lot* represents the firmness of right reason, which steadily pursues the objects of truth, and keeps a constant eye to the divine will: His wife is the figure of carnal sense, which apprehends nothing, relishes nothing, but gross and carnal things; favours not the things that be of God, but

^{*} Luke xvii.

the things that are of men: These are the only enjoyments it seeks, and takes delight in.—But, alas! in these very delights, it meets with its bane, and its misery;—often in this world, always in the next.—Herein likewise the wretched wife of *Lot* becomes the type and emblem of a soul, which, neglecting the practice of Mortification and Self-denial, and yielding to the forbidden gratifications of sense in this life, is doomed at length to a state of eternal reprobation in the next; and there unchangeably fixed in its aversion to God and goodness; looks back, indeed, towards its former sins with fierce insatiable desires; but instead of the sensual enjoyments, which in life she took pleasure in, sees nothing but the dreadful effects of her lusts, even that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which before she would not believe, but must now, by too late experience, feel, and be condemned to feel for ever. This will be the posture, and state unalterable, of every soul that departs unmortified and impenitent.—O let us think of this in time: Let us often remember *Lot's wife*, but more especially at this penitential season, when we are particularly called upon, by the angels of the church, to forsake this *Sodom* of the world, lest we likewise perish; and the same vengeance of eternal horror and despair overtake our unbelief, and punish our neglect.

27. *And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD.*

28. *And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.*

It is not for nothing that God is here pleased to tell us in his word, that *Abraham gat up early in the morning*, and repaired to the place where he had stood before the *LORD*; that he looked toward Sodom, and beheld the smoke of the country go up as the smoke of a furnace: No; it is to suggest to us some such useful instructions as these;

29. *And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.*

these; that good men, such as *Abraham* was, take little or no rest, when the judgments of God are in the earth. They have more concern and solicitude (not only for their friends, but) for the wicked, who are to suffer, than the wicked have for themselves.—While *Lot* was spending the night in soliciting his friends and relations to escape the impending storm, *Abraham*, we may well suppose, was employing his wakeful hours in intercessions and prayers for that unhappy people, and especially for his kinsman *Lot*, and his family.—This was it that roused him up so early in the morning; this was it that made him repair to that particular spot, where the day before he had stood before the Lord, and humbly offered his petitions for mercy.—Possibly he hastened thither, as the most proper place to renew his charitable requests. But all in vain.—When his charity, rather than curiosity, turned his eye towards the devoted place, the dreadful scene of clouds of smoke, as from a furnace, convinced him, that no intercessions will prevail for hardened, impenitent sinners.

If it be asked; Why was *Abraham* permitted to see a spectacle, which was forbidden to *Lot*, on pain of death? and the prohibited sight whereof had actually turned his wife into a lifeless pillar? the reason may be this; and it is a reason that concerns us all:—The eye of *Abraham's* faith was strong enough to see the day of Christ's coming in the flesh, and to rejoice therein: Therefore he, and all that have such a faith as his, shall, with safety, behold his second coming in fiery indignation, to judge the world, whereof the destruction of *Sodom* was the type.—None but they, who can look on Christ as Redeemer, shall be able, in that terrible day, to see him as Judge, and live.—Observe we also, that in the midst of all temporal judgments,

judgments, God remembers mercy: Though he spared not the cities of *Sodom*, at the intercession of *Abraham*, yet spared he *Lot*; for when he *sent him out of the midst of that overthrow*, it is specially noted, that God *remembered Abraham*; that is, he saved *Lot* for *Abraham's* sake.—Conclude we then, if it be so great a blessing to bear relation to a faithful *Abraham*, a friend of God, how much more glorious and happy must it be, to be born of him, as we are in baptism; to be the members of his own Son, as we are then made, and children of the Most High!





The First Sunday in L E N T.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

GENESIS, Chapter xxii.

The virtue of self-denial exemplified in Abraham's readiness to offer up his son to God, in obedience to the divine command, and the blessing consequent thereupon.

1. *A*ND it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Behold, here I am.

*A*FTER these things, &c.] that is to say, after the destruction of Sodom, and the narrow escape of Lot out of the midst of that overthrow; both which the morning lesson has set before

us; the first, as an example of God's justice against impenitent sinners; the other, to shew that even the righteous shall scarcely be saved; and both, with intent, as was observed before, to awaken our fears into a lively sense of repentance; our present lesson proceeds to set before us the more perfect example of Abraham's faith and obedience, as an encouragement to our hopes, and a spur to our endeavours.—In Lot we beheld the lowest degree of grace, which God in mercy will accept; in Abraham, the highest we are to aspire after, and endeavour to imitate.—To which

which we may add, that, on comparing the two examples together, we see in *Lot* the frail and imperfect obedience of man; in *Abraham*, an emblem of the perfect and complete obedience of Christ; and that for this reason, among others, our church hath appointed this lesson both for this day, and also for *Good-Friday*, as most proper to begin, and to end, the season of *LENT*.

2. *And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

This is said to have been the tenth^a and last temptation, or trial of *Abraham*.—And how did he overcome? By his faith and self denial. His conquest over himself was perfect, because his faith was so: His faith procured him sure and constant help from God; and therefore,

his victory over the flesh, its affections and lusts, was ever sure and constant.—But the example of his *SELF-DENIAL* is what we are now chiefly directed by the church, at the beginning of this season of mortification, to have in our eye, as the subject most immediately necessary for our present imitation.—He had (as we observed on the xiith chapter) professedly entered into the covenant of grace, and renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil: He had given many proofs of his faith and obedience. He is now called upon (as the young man in the gospel^b, who lacked one thing to perfect him) to part with that one thing, the thing that sat nearest to his heart, the most beloved object of his affections, the very darling of his soul; even his son, his *only son*, his son *Isaac*, whom he loved:—And not only to part with him, but to *offer* him up, even for a *BURNT-offering*; to sacrifice him; yea, to slay him with his own hand.—Good God! how severe a trial was this!—They,

^a So observed by the *Jews* in their *Targum*.

^b *Luke* xviii.

who have any one favourite passion to part with^c, cannot but be sensible of the difficulty of giving it up, as an absolute sacrifice to the will of God, and the interests of religion: They even feel it to be, what our Lord calls it, "The cutting off a right hand, the plucking out a right eye." Hence it comes to pass, that the young man, who lacked this one thing to make him perfect, hath so many followers, and *Abraham* so very few. We rather go away very sorrowful, than follow Christ; though our parting be but with a misplaced affection, a false love, a real enemy.—But the faithful *Abraham*, without the least hesitation, or dispute, offered up not only the dearest pledge he had in the world, but the chief, the worthiest object of a most natural and rational affection:—Yea, parted with that very affection itself; for that is in truth the only sacrifice which God requires, and is best pleased withal: We may keep our children, our riches, our honours and dignities, provided our affections towards them be but offered up as a sacrifice, and free-will offering, to God.—But this will never be, except we take the holy *Abraham* for our guide, and, with *Isaac*, attend him to the mount *Moriab* (which, by interpretation, signifies the mount of God's fear); that is to say, except we be led by faith to the fear of God, even that faith and fear which worketh by love:—If this holy fear bring us to the cross of Christ; if there we present our bodies a living sacrifice, and crucify every affection and lust; we also shall be more than conquerors, through him that strengtheneth us.

When God commands,
 3. *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with* we are not to consult our passions or affections, nor take advice of the flesh.—So *St. Paul*, when sent to

^c See *St. Augustine's* conflict with his darling sin in the 8th book of his confessions.

him, and Isaac his son; and
clave the wood for the burnt-
offering, and rose up, and
went unto the place of which
God had told him.

preach the gospel to the
Gentiles, "conferred not
"with flesh and blood,"
but immediately obeyed.—
So here the faithful *Abraham*,
when bidden to offer up his

son, did not so much as acquaint his wife *Sarah*, nor
harken to the soft pleadings of nature, and his own
heart: The divine command was plain and express:
He therefore rose up early in the morning, without de-
liberating, without reluctance.—No sooner did he
know the will of God, but he made haste, and pro-
longed not the time to obey it.—He lingered not,
as *Lot* had done, but *rose up early* to put it in execu-
tion: Nay, as we may with *St. Ambrose* observe, so
resolute, so zealous and active was he to perform it,
that he himself *saddled his ass*, and did those other
lesser offices in order thereto, which otherwise were
the proper business or work of his servants to do.—
Nay, moreover, may not this very action, this sad-
dling his own ass, hint to us that example of "keep-
"ing our bodies under, and bringing them into sub-
"jection," which the practice of an apostle recom-
mends to us, and which we are, at this time more
especially, called upon by the church to do?

The holy fathers observe,
4. *Then on the third day* That the *third day*, in scrip-
Abraham lift up his eyes, ture, bears often a mystical
and saw the place afar off. and extraordinary sense; par-
ticularly, that it denotes the
third and last great dispensation of God's will to
mankind, namely, that of the gospel.—So here *Abra-*
ham, as, with his bodily eye, he on the *third day*
saw the place, where his son was to be offered, so
with his spiritual eye, the eye of faith, he looked
forward into the gospel times, and *saw the day of*
Christ (as yet afar off), as well as the *place*, even the

^d Gal. i. 15, 16.

spot, where his Redeemer was afterwards to suffer for him, and was glad^e; as our Lord testifies of him. Or perhaps, now it was, and before he reached the place, that the patriarch conceived in his heart that act of faith, which St. Paul ascribes to him; that God was able, and probably would raise up *Isaac* from the dead^f, and restore to him again a son, whom he at first received by miracle, and concerning whom such promises had been made.

5. *And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.*

All worldly concerns and interests, all fleshly lusts and appetites (which are figured to us here by the *young men*), also the animal or brutal part of our nature (signified by the *ass*), must be left behind, at the foot of the mount; that is, we must exert those acts of self-abnegation, purity, and holiness, which in baptism we covenanted to perform, whenever we come to the house of God, to worship there; and more especially, when we approach his altar, to celebrate the mystery of our dear Redeemer's passion.

6. *And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together.*

The literal meaning is obvious and plain; but the spiritual sense, which concerns us most, is somewhat hard to understand, and harder still to practise, when understood.—*Abraham* takes the *wood*, which, before, the *ass*, or the servants, had carried, and lays it upon *his son*. This may intimate to us, that there are times when God allows his servants the necessities and conveniencies of life, some worldly aids to ease and recreate us in the way, to help our infirmities, and to bear our burdens. But,

^e John viii. 56.

^f Heb. xi. 19.

at other times, when he calls us to a state of mortification and self-denial, we are to leave our temporal accommodations behind; to part with our comforts for a time; to take up our cross, and bear our own burden.—And by this action of *Abraham's* laying the *wood upon his son*, we see, as in a figure, the cross we are to take up, and follow Christ. But if we consider, that it is laid on us by the hand of a father, we shall bear it with patience, and not with grief.

Where is the lamb, &c.]

7. *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?*

How very moving a question must this be to a tender father!—how wounding an inquiry, to any heart that was not fortified by the shield of faith, rooted and grounded in divine love, as was *Abraham's*!—Such a faith indeed repels the sharpest

darts of temptation; such a love knows no rival, nor admits any competitor with God. It triumphs over all the tenderest calls of nature, and can sacrifice every human affection to the power of grace.—Little did *Isaac* think, when he asked the question, that he himself was the *Lamb* intended *for the burnt-offering*.—And this suggests another remark, which too few think of; yet ought at this time to be more especially considered; that when we are preparing to approach the altar of God, there to offer up our prayers and praises, the sacrifice which he approves, and has commanded, is not our lambs, nor our bullocks, our goods, or our money, but our souls, and our bodies, even ourselves. This living (not dead) sacrifice is holy and acceptable to him; this is our reasonable service, a rational oblation, as the original^s properly imports.

^s Λογικὴ λατρεία, in opposition to the sacrifice of brutes and animals, which are not endued with reason, as man is.

8. *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together.*

In this answer of *Abraham* we see, that faith refers all to God.—How, and in what manner, God would *provide*, his reason could not inform him; but still he doubts not, nor is solicitous about, the event.—His faith is sure, that God would *provide*, though he knew not how.—And this is the very essence of faith: —“The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen^h.”—He sees a power in God to do all things; he sees a wisdom and goodness in him to do all for the best; and there he rests; without any further hesitation, or curious inquiry.—But still this, tho’ a worthy act of faith, was not the utmost limit of *Abraham’s* belief; nor should it be ours. He saw not only what was best for the present distress, but he saw the love of God in Christ: He saw the Lamb which God himself had provided, for a burnt-offering to take away the sin of the world: Saw, perhaps at this instant, what he did not so clearly see before, that *Isaac* was to be the type of the world’s Redeemer.—And if God was willing to give his own Son, his only Son, for the salvation of him, and all mankind, why should he refuse his son, his only son, to God?—Press we home this reflection on our own hearts, and we shall think nothing too dear to part with for his sake, who gave his only-begotten Son to die for ours.

9. *And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.*

How shall we able to express the many extraordinary reflections, which croud into the mind on this surprising occasion?—This is one of those sublime instances of the power of faith, which soars above the ap-

^h Heb. xi. 1.

10. *And Abraham stretch-
ed forth his hand, and took
the knife to slay his son.*

prehension of carnal reason:
—The world therefore de-
rides, rather than admires,
this amazing act of obe-
dience, in the pious and faithful *Abraham*.—But had
we his faith, we also should be as ready to obey the
most self-denying command of God. Nay, had we
but a grain, even the smallest degree of faith, we
should behold a greatness of soul in this heroic action,
worthy to be admired, though above our imitation.
—But a strong faith will necessarily produce a strong
love. We cannot but prefer the will of God before
our own, or the strongest solicitations of sense or
nature, if we love and believe in him as we ought.
—*Abraham bound his son*, lest nature should rebel,
and prove too strong for duty. So should we our
passions and affections, that they may not resist the
will of God.—But the terror of instant death moved
not *Isaac* to oppose his father, or to struggle for his
own preservation.—Which shall we most admire, the
father's love of God, above his own child; or, the
son's obedience and love of duty above his own life!
And herein was prefigured to us that admirable love
of God to man, in not sparing his own Son, to die
for us; and that love of Christ towards mankind, in
submitting to be made a sacrifice for the sins of the
world, and enduring the vilest indignities, in all the
instances of a suffering life.

11. *And the angel of the
LORD called unto him out
of heaven, and said, Abra-
ham, Abraham. And he
said, Here am I.*

12. *And he said, Lay
not thine hand upon the lad,
neither do thou any thing
unto him: for now I know
that thou fearst God, see-*

Observe we how exactly
God times all his works,
especially those of mercy and
deliverance.—Our Lord of-
ten refers to this punctuali-
ty of time, in the divine
oeconomy:—"My time is
not yet come, &c." So
here, at the critical instant,
when *Abraham* had lifted up
his knife to slay his son, he

ing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.

is called upon, as it were, in haste [*Abraham, Abraham*], to stay his hand, and do nothing unto him.—Learn

we, from such passages as these, the wisdom of ordering our time, as well as our other talents, aright; that is, to the glory of God, and the benefit of ourselves and others.—At this season of *Lent* our heavenly Father brings us, as it were, to the altar; lifts up the *knife*, that is, sets before us his judgments, and perfect hatred of sin, to shew us our danger, and what we deserve, and shall inevitably suffer, except we repent.—But if our obedience be made perfect through sufferings; that is, if he sees an humble resignation of our will to his, and a readiness to suffer; he immediately stays the blow, and accepts the will for the deed, with a, *Now I know that thou fearest God*, &c.—Not that Omniscience could be ignorant of this before; but it is written for our instruction:—Do we believe in God? Let us evidence the sincerity of our faith, by the probity of our practice.—If we be ready to sacrifice all to him, to forsake father and mother, brethren and children, the dearest objects of our affections, in obedience to his will, we may then be assured he will also bear witness to us, That now he knows we fear him.—But this testimony is rather for our information and comfort, that so we also may know we fear him.—And whoever makes trial of any self-denying act of obedience, will as plainly hear this testimony from the God of comfort within, as *Abraham* did from heaven.

13. And *Abraham* lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his

“ The more we deny ourselves, the more will God bestow :” This was the dictate of natural religion¹. —*Abraham* had freely part-

¹ *Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit, A diis plura feret.*

borns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering, in the stead of his son.

14. And Abraham called the name of that place *Jebowah-jireh*: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

also a ram in the thicket, to suffer in his stead; that so neither Abraham might want a sacrifice, nor God his offering, though Isaac escape.

15. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time;

16. And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son;

17. That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

18. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice.

ed with all his earthly comfort and hopes, the delight of his eyes, and the joy of his heart. But was he a loser? No: The God whom he made the oblation to, not only restores him his darling son, safe and found, a son now much more endeared to him by the meekness of his submission to God's and his father's will; but provides

But what is far greater, far more excellent, the whole action is crowned with a blessing that contains all blessings; a blessing not only promised, but also confirmed with an oath.—*By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, &c.*—The heart of man is naturally timorous and diffident towards God, especially since our fall; and therefore, notwithstanding all that the Mediator hath done, to make peace between God and us, and all the promises of mercy and forgiveness so often repeated in the divine word, yet still the more effectually to quiet the terrors of an accusing conscience, and to strengthen our confidence and trust in his mercy,

cy, God is pleased to confirm his gracious promises by an oath, the more abundantly to shew us the immutability of his counsel.—This is the remark of *St. Paul* on this very oath, which God swore unto *Abraham*, and which (as the apostle observes it for our comfort) is equally extended to all the heirs of promise: “That so, by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us^k.” Yea, whatever we do for his sake, though it be but the giving a cup of cold water in his name; the denying ourselves any little pleasure or enjoyment, in obedience to his will; sacrificing to him the inclination or appetite of the flesh, and dedicating the time, or the value to God, shall assuredly be admitted to a larger share of his blessing, when the time of blessing comes: For so (as we may further observe) the strong emphasis of the expression [*In blessing I will bless thee*] does properly import. It is not an *Hebraism* only, or a figurative form of speech, a bare asseveration, or strong assurance, That God will certainly bless, as some expound it; but it intimates to us more particularly, that there are certain SEASONS, which he has more especially set apart for conferring of his blessings.—And, at those stated times of benediction, the pious ascetic, who has practised an holy and religious abstinence, self-denial, and mortification for his sins, shall at the season of blessing, when God comes to distribute his heavenly gifts and graces, be sure to receive more abundant blessings. In a word, and to our present purpose, all those who rightly and religiously observe this penitential season of LENT, running neither into vain-glory, nor any indiscreet extremes, shall certainly find this gracious promise verified at EASTER, that season of blessing, that high

* Heb. vi. 18.

day of heavenly benedictions.—He that now mourns as he ought, shall then be assuredly comforted.—*In blessing God will bless him; i. e.* He shall be sure of a blessing, when that time of refreshing comes from the presence of the Lord.—“Good God! said St. Jerom, after his *Lent* exercise was over, O what joys, what comfort did I find!”—And may not, O Lord, thy poor servant say the same?

19. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up, and went together to Beer-sheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

Abraham's returning from his sacrifice, and going to Beer-sheba, and dwelling there, may very aptly put us in mind, that after we have commemorated the death of Christ in the holy Sacrament, yea, after every

exalted act of piety, or religious mortification, our care should still be to return to, and keep close to, our baptismal vow; to *dwell at*, and have in our constant thoughts, the solemn Oath we made at the waters of baptism, that *Beer-sheba*, or *well of the oath*, where we swore unto God, on our entering into covenant with him.—Hither is our most proper remove from and after every other act of duty; here we must *dwell*, and have our abode, while we sojourn upon earth.—See more in Rem. on *Good-Friday*.

20. And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor;

21. Huz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,

22. And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

This is a new part of *Abraham's* history, and may seem of little consequence to us, though of no small concern to him, to hear of the prosperity and increase of his kindred. But whereas the general rule to us is, That “no Scripture is of any private interpretation,” we shall find, on a nearer and more attentive view of this passage, that there

23. *And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nabor, Abraham's brother.*

24. *And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gabam, and Thabash, and Maachab.*

there is milk and honey to be extracted out of this seemingly barren place.—First, We observe it begins, and is introduced with, the same form of connexion, to something going before, wherewith the chapter begins; viz. *And it came to pass after these things.* But

the *things* referred to in the beginning of our lesson, and the *things* here spoken of, being partly different, suggest to us a different application.—*Abraham* had been exercised with many trials and temptations, even before he was commanded to sacrifice *Isaac*; so that the whole history we have received of his life till that time, contains little else but various scenes of affliction and trials, of which the *Jews* reckon nine (as was before observed); yet still, *after all these things*, all these former trials, he is put upon one more severe, and more mortifying to flesh and blood, than any of the rest: Which is a lesson to us, that while we sojourn upon earth, especially if we profess a life of faith and religion, we are to expect tribulations and sufferings in the course of our duty; that our state here is a state of probation; and that, when one trial is over, we have reason to look for another; and perhaps, far sharper than any of the former.—Thus it fared with the faithful and pious *Abraham*: Why then shall we think it strange, concerning the fiery and repeated trials that befall us, as tho' some strange thing happened unto us, when even *Abraham*, the friend of God, yea, when Christ, the very Son of God most high, were made perfect through sufferings, before they entered into glory?—But it is said of *Abraham*, That *after these things*, (i. e. after those former trials) *GOD tempted him*. Now, to take this expression in its full and proper light, it is to be noted, that his former troubles were more immediately

diately from secular and outward things ; a life of wandering and exile from his native country and friends, in a land of strangers ; no rest or settled abode even here, but war and famine, together with some affecting grievances happening in his own family ; and at last a most dreadful conflagration of a whole country in his neighbourhood, in which his own nephew was so great a sufferer.—Then follows, *After these things* GOD tempted ; i. e. God himself now takes him in hand, and lays a trial upon him, not only more severe than all the rest, but in a case principally and more intimately relating to God himself ; and this was to prove the sincerity of his love.—His faith had been tried ; and his obedience to the divine command obtained him the testimony that he believed God ; and that it was counted unto him for righteousness.—His fear of God had also been approved, by his submitting to the painful injunction of circumcision ; and therefore he was admitted into covenant with God. It remained, that a trial should be made of his love ; whether he loved God better than what he loved best in the world, his own, his only, his beloved son. Therefore it is said, *That after all those other things* GOD tempted (that is, tried) whether he had this virtue also ; whether he loved God supremely, and above all other things, the very dearest objects of his love.—In this *Abraham* was found sincere ;—and so must we : Otherwise our faith, our covenant, our obedience, will be of none effect. Love must crown all our works, to make them effectual to salvation.—And when our love hath been so tried, and found perfect and sincere, then it is we may expect some cessation from our worldly trials.

Therefore, Secondly, the words [*After these things*] in the close of our lesson including the trial and evidence of *Abraham's* love to God, we are told of the prosperity and increase of *Abraham's* family ; not only that his nephew *Lot* was saved out of the overthrow of *Sodom* (chap. xix.), but that his brother *Nabor* had
 been

been blessed with a numerous offspring. And after this, we hear of no more trials or sufferings that be- fel the pious *Abraham*.—Perfect love not only casteth out fear, but often sufferings too. Yea, no suffer- ings are sufferings to him that truly loves God. To such an one all things work together for good : Yea, he joys in tribulation ; he counteth it all joy, when he falleth into divers temptations. Amen, so be it.





The Second Sunday in LENT.

Proper Lessons for { M. P. GEN. Chap. xxvii.
E. P. — Chap. xxxiv.

P R E F A C E.

THERE are two dangerous rocks, on which penitents too often make shipwreck of their hopes, and miscarry; namely, hypocrisy, and self-indulgence.

If our enemy observe a person determined to exercise the severe discipline of mortification and fasting in Lent, and cannot withdraw him from his purpose; his next attempt is, to divert the edge of his repentance, from the hatred of sin, to things of less importance; to place a merit in the means, and thereby turn his zeal into hypocrisy and formality; or else, by the help of self-indulgence, he betrays us to a neglect of those restraints, and wholesome severities, which the church enjoins all this season, for subduing the corruptions of nature, and restoring the spiritual life and health. He persuades us, that the austerities of fasting, watching, or retrenching any of our usual refreshments, are a prejudice to our bodily health, and rather serve to indispose us for, than to assist our devotions; at best, that it is but a piece of unnecessary cruelty to ourselves, a voluntary humility and will-worship, a mere work of supererogation, and relique of Popish superstition, rather than a necessary part of Christian duty. And that text is very often too effectually applied

applied to this occasion, "Be not righteous over-much; for why shouldst thou destroy thyself?"

To obviate these wiles and depths of Satan, which the deceitfulness and prevarication of our own hearts, on one hand, and an effeminate self-love, on the other, do too much favour, and strike in with; the church has this day, in all the Scriptures selected for our instruction, more especially warned us against both these fatal gulphs, and equally dangerous extremes.

In Esau she represents to us the nature and unhappy issue of a false and ill-grounded repentance.—Esau, we find, sued for the blessing with more earnestness than his brother; for he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry; but obtained it not, because his sorrow wanted all the ingredients of a sincere repentance.

In the first place, he had sold his birthright for a most contemptible price; for one poor morsel, making away the inestimable privilege settled on him, in virtue of primogeniture, as heir of the promises made to Abraham.—This plainly argued him to be a most profane and irreligious person, a slave to appetite and sense; quite destitute of faith in the merits of the promised Redeemer; therefore unqualified for receiving a spiritual blessing.

Secondly, Although his brother had fairly bought his birthright, and with it the blessing annexed; yet he hated Jacob, even because of the blessing wherewith his father had blessed him; nay, comforted himself for the disappointment, with the horrible thought of murdering his own brother; consequently, he must needs be void of charity.

Thirdly and fourthly, He repented indeed, and that with a deep and exceeding bitter sorrow, when he found himself in danger of losing his father's blessing; but as he took that blessing in a temporal sense only, and consequently felt no remorse for the loss of the better part, the One thing needful; and grieved only that he was like to fare the worse in his Worldly interests; it is evident

his Repentance wanted two other essential ingredients, Faith and Sincerity.

In all these four respects, Esau is a lively emblem of a False Penitent; and is therefore set here as a monument, to warn us of the danger of a carnal and profane mind; that we may (as St. Paul exhorts) “look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God” (which grace was typified by Isaac’s Blessing): “Lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his Birthright. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

In this last respect, Esau’s repentance is an image of that despair, which will seize the wicked when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves thrust out. Then they, repenting and groaning for anguish, shall bitterly lament their folly, for having forfeited that blessed Inheritance which was entailed upon them in the Baptismal Covenant, for the vain pomps, and momentary pleasures, of this wicked world.—With what weeping and gnashing of teeth, what great and exceeding bitter cries, will they then intreat for mercy? Even the least mercy shall then be esteemed a blessing;—if not Heaven, if not Perfect happiness, yet a little water;—nay, one Drop of water to cool their scorching tongues: But, alas! God has already warned us, what answer such persons are to expect:—“Because I called, and ye refused, &c. I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh;—for that you hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:—Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices.”

^b Heb. xii.

^c Prov. i. 24, &c.

In contrast to this, and as a fair light to so dark a shade, the gospel for this day^a presents us with a most comfortable and encouraging example, in the history of the Canaanitish woman, to assure our hope, that our sincere, if persevering, endeavours and prayers shall never fail to prevail for mercy, if we seek it while it may be found. And our holy church, as a tender and loving mother, advertises us by her appointment of the Lenten-season, that "NOW is the ACCEPTED TIME; that This is the " DAY of SALVATION."

The Second SUNDAY in L E N T.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xxvii.

Esau forfeiteth, and Jacob obtaineth, the blessing.

i. *AND it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: And he said unto him, Behold, here am I.*

ISAAC being now in the hundred and thirty-seventh year of his age, and his eyes so dim, that he could not distinguish one person from another; he conceived the day of his death was near at hand; and therefore called for his eldest son *Esau*,

with intention to give him the last and solemn Benediction, with which the great and good men of those times were wont to bequeath their inheritances to their children; and to appoint him his proper Heir, both as to the bulk of his temporal estate, and the special privileges promised to his family, even the Blessing of *Abraham*; that is, both a right to the land of *Canaan*, and likewise to be the Head of the

^a Matt. xv.

holy Seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed.—These Privileges belonged indeed to *Esau*, as the First-born; but were forfeited by his extreme unworthiness; nay, had been formally sold away and alienated by his own profane act and deed, for the most despicable price of a meal's meat.

2. *And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.*

That is, I know not how soon I may die.—Where observe, every good parent, and wise man, provides for his children, and sets his

house in order, before his death.

3. *Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver, and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;*

We may hence learn, in general, that the blessing of our heavenly Father is not to be obtained, though we stand in ever so near a relation to him, dear as Children, and honourable as the First-born, except with diligent labour, and sincere pains, we pursue those things which he commands, and bring our *savoury meat* (that

4. *And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.*

is, our good works) *which he loves.*

5. *And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son: And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.*

Rebekah, who was apprised of the surrender, which *Esau* had made of his Birth-right in favour of *Jacob*; who also remembered the divine Oracle (chap. xxv. 23.), “That the Elder

“should serve the Younger;”—and therefore knew assuredly, that the Blessing of right belonged to her younger son; hearing what passed between *Esau* and his father, took the opportunity (while *Esau* was gone to the field) to instruct her son *Jacob*, how he might obtain the Blessing, as well as the Birthright; for that they ought to go together.—These things *she* knew,

knew, and *Isaac* might not know: As a kind wife, and tender mother, 'tis probable she had not acquainted her husband with her son *Esau's* great Profaneness, lest it should grieve him.

6. *And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,*

7. *Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.*

8. *Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, according to that which I command thee.*

9. *Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth.*

10. *And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.*

We may not suppose, that *Isaac* designed to settle the blessing on his son *Esau*, contrary to the will and designation of heaven; but rather, that he did not fully understand the import of the oracle: And although we grant that he had been informed of his profaneness, in slighting and selling his Birthright; yet it is possible, his natural affection might suggest to him this further trial, as an experiment whether he ought to give him the blessing of the first-born or no.—His missing the venison before^e, and returning empty and hungry from the field, occasioned the loss of his birthright; and should he now miss it again, this would be a sign to him, that it was God's will he should lose

the Blessing also.—If we take the affair in this light, the scheme here laid by *Rebekah*, as well as the whole transaction and issue, will then appear a plain and evident interposal of Providence, to prevent his misapplying the blessing, and bestowing it, contrary to the will of Heaven, upon one so unworthy, who not only despised it, but had parted with all his right and

title thereto, by his own wilful act, and profane surrender.

11. *And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is an hairy man, and I am a smooth man.*

12. *My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.*

Jacob represents to his mother both the difficulty and the danger of imposing upon his father: The difficulty of personating one so very unlike him; the great danger of incurring his father's displeasure and indignation, should he discover the fraud. — And here, if, with the primitive fathers, we admire the just and well-grounded affection of *Rebekah*

for her younger son, we cannot, at the same time, but approve this son's pious Reverence for his Father, his fear of offending him, and the ingenuity of his temper. — How far is he from all thought of Artifice and Guile; how loth to engage in any thing that had the appearance of Deceit, although it were to gain him the greatest advantage! How much more sensible of his Duty than his Interest! — Good children dread nothing more than a Parents Curse, or even incurring their displeasure.

By this we see, and by a passage in *Plato's* book of Laws, that right reason, and the very light of nature, as well as religion, dictate this lesson, to desire the Blessing, and to dread the Curse, of a Parent: [*Πᾶς δὲ τῶν ἑχών, &c.*] — Saith he, “ Every wise
“ child hath an awful apprehension and regard for
“ his parent's prayers, knowing and observing, on
“ many occasions, the great benefit and importance
“ of them.” — To the like purpose the son of *Sirach*,
“ The blessing of the father establisheth the houses
“ of the children, and the curse of the mother rooteth
“ out foundations.” Chap. iii. 9.

ⁱ *Admirabilis illa et amans filii*, said St. Chrysostom, speaking of *Rebekah*.

Rebekah

13. *And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.*

14. *And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.*

Rebekah doth not encourage her son (as some mothers do) to make light of his Father's displeasure, but imprecates on herself the ill consequences he seemed to fear.—In which we may observe, not only her great love and zeal for her son's happiness, equal to that of a *Moses*^z, or a *St. Paul*^h, “who were content to be “accursed for their brethrens sake;” which one of the fathersⁱ calls “An Apostolic Heroism and Magnanimity in her.”—But we may well presume, she now communicated to him, at least reminded him of, the oracle which had been revealed to her, concerning him and his brother, before they were born, “That the elder should serve the younger^k :” That therefore it was not so much her own, as God's intention, that he should have the eldership, and consequently the Benediction, or noble and divine privileges annexed thereto: That therefore there was no fear of success, no danger of a *curse*: That she would be answerable for any ill consequence of the measures she put him upon: Upon this he consented, and followed her directions.—But the example of *Rebekah* is no precedent for rash imprecations, such as that of the *Jews* was, “That *Christ*'s blood might “be upon them and their children.”—Let none imitate her in this, but such as have as sure a word of prophecy^l to depend upon, as she had.

To carry on more effectually the design of gaining the benediction, under the

15. *And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest*

^z *Exod.* xxxii. 32. ^h *Rom.* ix. 3. ⁱ *Isidor.* ^k *Gen.* xxv. 23.
^l The *Chaldee* paraphrases her answer to *Jacob* thus; “It was said to me by prophecy, that curses shall not come upon thee, but “blessings.” *Aynsworth.*

son *Esau*, which were with her in the house, and put them upon *Jacob* her younger son.

16. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck.

17. And she gave the savoury meat, and the bread which she had prepared, into the hand of her son *Jacob*.

appearance and person of *Esau*, *Rebekah* dressed her younger son in the robe which belonged to the elder, and was in her keeping; she also so placed the skins of the kids upon his hands, and smooth parts of his neck, as might prevent any discovery, and make him pass for the elder, with his aged father, as he was already the elder, both by decree of the

oracle, and likewise by the cession and actual sale of *Esau*.—Various are the sentiments, and many the disputes of expositors, concerning the nature of this transaction of *Rebekah* and *Jacob*. Some downright condemn it as a trick, and a lye; some excuse it as an infirmity; others justify it as a pious fraud, and an innocent lye (the *Popish* writers especially, that they may make of it a cloak for their equivocations, and mental reservation); others, and in general, the ancient fathers, vindicate the action as free from any sin, and done by an instinct from God, for mystical use and instruction to others; “That disputings in such cases are dangerous; at least, more curious than useful; and all positive decisions too presumptuous.” Well therefore does *St. Chrysostom* advise, “Pry not so narrowly into the fact itself, as into the scope and design of it^k.”—And if we attend to the design, so various and so complicated a scene of mysteries presents itself in this wonderful history, as at first view dazzles the eye, and may therefore be the reason of those many perplexed expositions concerning it. But the most suitable to this solemn season of repentance, and consequently to the

^k *Dilecte, ne indages tantum quod fit, sed attende etiam scopum, &c.*
Hom. 53. in Gen.

sense and design of our excellent church, seems to be this; that we should consider the whole in an allegorical sense^l; to wit, *Rebekah* as a type of the Church; her two sons as emblems of the *Jew* and the *Gentile*, or, more generally, of bad and good men; or else, more particularly, of nature and grace; the younger, that is, the latter of all these, namely, grace, Obtaining; the other Forfeiting the Blessing.

—The fetching the *venison*, the dressing it, and the benediction promised, may represent the terms of the second covenant; for these are the same both to *Jew* and *Gentile*, to good men and bad, namely, Mercies on God's part, and Duties on ours.—The *two kids, tender and good*, seem to figure to us the death of Christ, and with him ours; for we must die with Christ^m, if we would live with him; we must suffer with him, if we would reign with himⁿ.—The *savoury meat* made hereof, *such as our Father loveth*, are the graces and virtues derived from this sacrifice of Christ and Ourselves, which is our reasonable service, most pleasing and acceptable to God.—But we are to observe, that though *Jacob* fetched the kids, it was his Mother that dressed them, and made the *savoury meat*, such as his father loved; which teaches us, that although our faith is to bring the sacrifice, it is the Church must dress and prepare it, for the liking and acceptance of our heavenly Father. It is not our own faith, or works alone; it is not our own best endeavours, without the ministrations of the Church; which can procure his blessing.—Again; taking the Mystery in another light, it seems to vary its appearance, and to shift the scene.—This sacrifice must be presented in the person of our elder brother (for in the point of real eldership, without any respect to the other part of the character, *Esau*

^l We may say of them, as St. Paul does of *Isaac* and *Ishmael*, &c. *These things are allegories*, Gal. iv. 24.

^m Rom. vi. 8.

ⁿ 2 Tim. ii. 12.

bears the figure of CHRIST). In *His goodly raiment* [*which are with Rebekah in the house*, that is, which the church had the custody of], in *His desirable garments*^o, and robes of righteousness^p, must we appear before our heavenly Father, when we come for his blessing. Nay, to shew us, that we must conform ourselves to him in Every likeness, our *hands* and *necks* must be disguised; the very *smooth* of our necks (our fairest and most plausible appearances of virtue and goodness) must be covered before him, and every possible resemblance must be put on of *Jesus Christ* our elder brother.—Note also, the sacerdotal robe^q, which *Jacob* put on, represented his Divine; the *bairy skins*, his Human nature.—And so far we may, and must resemble him; but still the *voice* is *Jacob's* voice: This no art can change, no skill disguise: We are still sinners; still supplanters. But our heavenly Father, as it were, suffering himself to be deceived (O infinite condescension of divine goodness!), passes by this defect, because not in our power to alter, or conceal; and bestows the *blessing* on the Penitent soul, as if he were his *son*, his *very*

^o So the Hebrew. ^p *Isaiah* lxi. 10. *Rev.* vi. 11.

^q *Sacerdotal Robe.*] It was, most probably, the robe wherein *Esau*, as eldest son, in the decline of his father, officiated as priest, in offering the sacrifices, and other holy ministries.—Note also, that eating flesh, in antient times, was a sacramental action (see *Parker*, &c.). Hence *Solomon*, describing a family stocked with great plenty of flesh-meat, calls it an *house full of sacrifices*, *Prov.* xvii. 1.—The poet also speaks to the same effect;

*Et natalitium cognatis ponere lardum,
Accedente nova, siquam dabat hostia, carne.*

Juv. Sat. XI.

“ —Heretofore 'twas thought a sumptuous treat,
“ On birth days, festivals, or days of state,
“ A salt dry slice of bacon to prepare;
“ If they had fresh meat, 'twas delicious fare!
“ Which rarely happen'd, and 'twas highly priz'd,
“ If ought was left of what they sacrific'd.

DRYDEN

son.

son.—He is not extreme to mark the difference, although he notes it: The *voice*, saith he, is *Jacob's voice* (the voice of a prevaricator, a supplanter, as that name imports); *but the hands are the hands of Esau*; and he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy as his brother Esau's hands;—so he blessed him.—Thus we see, in this mysterious representation, what is the Manner, as well as Terms, of obtaining the *blessing* from our heavenly Father.—First, It belongs not to us by Nature; we are not Born to it, but acquire it by a Purchase, and a kind of Stratagem.—Secondly, Apply for it we must, not in our Own persons, but in the person of Christ our *elder brother*.—Thirdly, Receive it we cannot, in our own Right, but in His. To him, the Son, the *very Son of God*, is the *blessing* Directly and Immediately given;—to us only indirectly, as we come in His Person, and His Likeness.—If thus we come, and steal, as it were, the blessing; the subtilty shall not be imputed as a criminal Fraud, but a pious and wise zeal; “as deceivers indeed, and yet true.”—And whoever arraigns this Mercy in God, this pious Wisdom in man, shall have the answer from God, which *Isaac* gave to *Esau*, *I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed*.—And let every penitent and humble soul, with joy and thankfulness, say *Amen*; not prying into the literal and critical meaning of the history, but embracing with faith the spiritual sense, and most comfortable import, of this glorious precedent of grace and mercy.—Our holy mother the church is now instigating all her children to follow the example of the beloved *Jacob*: And to imitate Him in gaining the blessing of our elder brother, is a laudable covetousness, an holy ambition; and shall not fail of success, if we come in his name, and his likeness.

Here *Jacob* comes and
 18. And he came unto speaks to his father, yea, stiles
 his father, and said, My him father: *Isaac* likewise,

father: And he said, Here in his answer, calls him, *am I; who art thou, my son;* yet puts this question to him, *Who art thou?* as if

he knew him not. The plain and literal sense of which question is, "Which of my two sons art thou?" He expected *Esau*; but a speedier return from his hunting than could well be expected, might make him doubt, whether it could be his son *Esau*, or not. The voice was *Jacob's*, but him he expected not; and therefore the surprize threw him into the uncertainty, which of his sons it might be. This seems to be the most natural import of the question: But if we enter into the mystery couched in this passage, which to us is ever the most instructive, and consequently the most interesting sense of Scriptural History, we may discover herein a doctrine of great importance to us all. God, as Creator, is the great Father of all things, more especially of mankind, who were formed in his image; "for we are his offspring." But Man, by sin, having lost that divine likeness, he knows us no more (in that state) as Children, but as rebels, and objects of his wrath. He owns none for his children, but such as are made so by a second birth, and have put on the likeness of his Son *Jesus Christ*.—Hence therefore, when the penitent comes to God for the blessing, though he call him *Father*, yet the question is put to him (and this suggests, that he should put the like question to himself), *Who art thou?* that is to say, What kind of filial relation do I bear to God? Which of his sons am I, his son by grace, as well as nature, or am I his son by nature only? If made his son by adoption and grace, bearing the likeness and name of him, who is his Son, his very Son, *Jesus Christ*, and the express image of his Father, then shall I be accepted, and obtain the blessing. If by nature only, I shall be rejected, as *Esau* was, though I seek it with many tears.

* *Acts* xvii. 28.

Thus

19. *And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.*

Thus *Jacob* here assumes not only the robe, but the very name of *Esau*: And Christ himself justifies this communication of names and interests, between him and his people:—"I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was, &c. Lord, when saw we thee an hungred? &c. Then shall he say unto them, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto Me."—In like manner Christ saith of *John* the Baptist, "This is *Elias*, which was for to come:" And Christ himself is often, in the Scriptures, called literally and expressly *David*, *Israel*, and *Jacob*.

20. *And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me.*

All men seek the Blessing, that is, true Happiness; but by different ways: *Esau* in the Field, with his quiver and his bow; but *Jacob* at Home, and by the help and advice of his Mother; that is to say, Carnal men hunt for it in the World; and think to hit the mark, and win the prize, with their arrow and their bow, i. e. by their own wit and address. But *Jacob*, or the Spiritual person, the man after God's own heart, saith, "I will not trust in my bow; it is not my sword that shall help me."—Such an one seeks happiness where alone it is to be found, from the hand of God, and in the way which he prescribes, namely, in the church, and by the appointed means of grace. Therefore he finds what he seeks; yea, finds it quickly, because the Lord his God doth bring it to him, and sets it before him.

† Matt. xxv. 35, &c.

‡ Heb. before me.

§ Psalm xliv.

The Blessing, which at this Season every Christian is called upon to seek, is the Remission of Sins; even that *Blessing* which St. *Peter* speaks of, as the fruit and effect of Christ's Coming,—“God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to BLESS you, in turning every one of you from your Iniquities^x.” And this Blessing of Conversion and Pardon is attainable only by Repentance. Repentance is the only sure, and therefore the speediest and *quickest* way to Pardon and Peace^y.

21. *And Isaac said unto Jacob, come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau, or not.*

22. *And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father, and he felt him; and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.*

23. *And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: So he blessed him.*

24. *And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.*

25. *And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he*

Isaac was blind, as to the face and outward appearance of his sons; so our heavenly Father is not extreme to mark what we are in our own persons; he shuts his eyes, and will not see our Personal defects. Nevertheless, he confers not the Blessing without our compliance with the instituted terms and conditions of his Grace; yea, not without a strict probation of our Faith and Sincerity. *Isaac* feels his son, tastes of his venison, then kisses him, and smells the smell of his raiment, before he blesses him.—Thus, to prove whether we be worthy; whether we be his *very sons*, his true and genuine Children, coming in the Name, the Robe, and Spirit^z, of our Elder brother *Christ*;

^x *Acts* v. 26.

^y See St. *Ambrose* moralizing on this History, Vol. I. p. 326.

^z *Spirit*:] Which was typified by the smell of the raiment which *Jacob* had upon him.

brought him wine, and he drank.

26. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27. And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field, which the LORD hath blessed.

28. Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

29. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blessing thee.

30. And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31. And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father; and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art

God first *feels* us by a Touch of his hand, that is, by some outward Affliction, or inward Grace: He *tastes*, and considers our Works, if *savoury*, and rightly condited and seasoned with Faith and Virtue:—He *smells* our *raiment*, the odour of our Conversation and Example, if conformed to that of Christ, and perfumed with the rich Graces of his Holy Spirit; then, by a gracious *kiss*, seals his love to us, and bestows the Benediction.

In the disappointment of *Esau*, and his sorrow for missing the blessing, we plainly see the conduct and fate of worldly men; and should fly the example, as we would avoid their doom.—*Esau* forfeits the blessing, because he had despised his birthright: he grieves for the loss of the blessing, but not for the crime which caused it.—Ill men do just the same; the greatest sinners would fain be happy, but slight the Means that lead thereto. They desire, yea, hope

thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born Esau.

33. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who^a, where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.

34. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

35. And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

hope to be saved, but without Virtue, and to go to heaven without Obedience. But God is too wise to throw away his blessings on those who reject his Commands, and despise his Grace; too just, to reward his declared enemies, and crown a traitor.—A time will come, when careless and impenitent Sinners shall be convinced of this truth, That mercy is only Conditional, and Obedience alone intitled to the blessing and reward of everlasting Happiness; that a fruitless and eternal repentance is the certain consequence of not repenting in time, and while

^a *Who, where is he?*] A very emphatical vehemence is observable in these words, expressing not only a passionate eagerness to be informed who the person was, that had been with him before Esau came; but a violent surprize, and confusion of spirit: The speech is hasty and abrupt, and uttered doubtless with a raised voice. The first question, *Who?* is what I think the rhetoricians call *apostrophesis*, like that in *Virgil*,—*Quos ego*—* where the remaining part of the sentence is suppressed, resting in the mind, but not uttered in words. *Who? i. e.* who is he that came in just now? And it is not unlikely, but that before he had time to utter the whole question, it darted into his mind, that it was his son Jacob, who had used that stratagem to obtain the blessing; for by adding, after his first surprize was over, and saying, with a calm and composed accent [*I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed*], it may seem that Isaac was satisfied in his mind, that it was his son Jacob, whom he had blessed; and therefore now confirmed the blessing to him: And we cannot doubt but that it was the Holy Spirit of God, who had so ordered the matter, that the benediction should be conferred on Jacob, and also be confirmed to him by his father.

* *Æneid* I.

36. *And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?*

37. *And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?*

38. *And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lift up his voice, and wept.*

39. *And Isaac his father answered, and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.*

40. *And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother: and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.*

41. *And Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob.*

mercy may be found.—*Esau* sought the blessing with tears, but come too late to obtain it:—Hell is full of Penitents; but their day of grace is past.—How ought such dreadful examples of Desperation to excite our diligence, and quicken our repentance, while it is called To-day; while our Conscience alarms, while God and his Church invite, while the day of Salvation lasts; and more especially, while this our Penitential Season holds! For now we may say with assurance, and cannot too often repeat, “This is the accepted Time: this is the Day of Salvation.”

Now we see plainly why *Esau* wept and cried so loud:—It was not Repentance; for there was no Humility, no Faith, no Charity, no concern for the loss of the true blessing. His tears were both late and false; the tears of Rage, of Envy, of carnal Desire.

42. *And these words of Esau, her elder son, were told to Rebekah: And she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.*

43. *Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran.*

44. *And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away;*

45. *Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then will I send and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?*

46. *And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?*

Desire.—Every miscreant can wish himself well, and no man would be miserable, were it enough to Desire happiness.—While *Esau* howls for the Loss of the blessing, he never looks at his own Demerit; he hates his brother's Subtilty, but not his own Profaneness: He can see that his Father was deceived, and *Jacob* a supplanter; but sees not that God was just, and Himself profane.—Hence, like another *Cain*, he resolves to slay his Brother, because he was more righteous than himself, and more accepted of God—And as one Sin begets another, he is not afraid to wish his Father's Death, that he may effect his Brother's.—Yet, which of us all are careful enough, to avoid the first steps which led him to these monstrous and unnatural Crimes?—Do we not sell our heavenly Inheritance for a Trifle, whenever any worldly Advantage tempts us to a wilful Sin? Do we not literally barter it for a meal's meat,

when we prefer the pleasures of Taste, to the spiritual Exercises and Duties of Religion; when we slight the positive Injunctions of the Church, at this and other seasons of Abstinence and Mortification, merely for the sake of a craving Appetite? If we would not imitate

imitate *Esau* in the more shocking Crimes of Malice and Revenge, we must keep at a distance from the Indulgence of Appetite; we must learn to curb the Flesh, and bring the Body under.—We see in him, and ought to dread in ourselves, the ready transition there is from the works of the Flesh, to the works of the Devil; from acts of Intemperance to Profaneness, and then, to Envy and Murder.—The Apostle intimates this dreadful gradation of sin, in those three words, and even by the order he ranges them in, Earthly, Sensual, Devilish^b. The two first beget the last; and the last so naturally flows from the former, as that there needed no particle of Connexion to join them. This also appeared so plain to natural reason, that the wise *Pythagoras*^c, in those his truly golden verses, begins his precepts of moral virtue with the necessity of restraining the taste.

^b *James* iii. 15.

^c *By use thy body's appetites assuage,
Thy belly first, thy sleep, thy lust, thy rage.*

The reason for this order of beginning *first* with the Belly, see in *Hierocles's* comment on this precept of *Pythagoras*.





The Second Sunday in L E N T.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xxxiv.

The rape of Dinah, or the danger and fatal effects of running into voluntary temptation.

1. *AND Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.*

2. *And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.*

Hitherto, we may presume, *Dinah* had kept with her mother, and under the eye and inspection of her Parents: But upon occasion, as we are told, of some festival at *Shechem*, where public shews were to be seen, and a great concourse of people from all parts, she was tempted by her curiosity to venture into the town, unguarded, and probably alone; perhaps with no design of conversing with any but the ladies of the country, and only to see their customs, and their fashions.—This seemed an harmless jaunt, an innocent diversion; but it proved her ruin.—*Shechem*, the Prince of the country, sees her; falls in love with her; gets her by some stratagem into his power; and deflowers her.—Let this story be a warning to all young and unmarried women, not to gad from home; not to allow themselves

selves any dangerous liberties of public plays and entertainments, without the company and guard of their friends :—Much less to wander from their Heavenly Father's house, the Church, and make parties and acquaintance with Aliens or Heretics, persons of No Religion, or of that which is false.

3. *And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.*

The violation of chastity, and forcing a Virgin, has ever been looked upon, even by the law of nature, as a capital crime, a violence worthy of death. Yet the Ravisher's constancy seems to deserve some commendation. He did not treat her, as we read, *Amnon* did his sister *Tamar*^a: his lust turned not to hatred, but to a greater love, and desire of matrimony.—This, being the only reparation he could make her for the loss of her honour, is an example to be imitated by every one that is guilty of the like crime.—We are told, that he *spake kindly to the Damsel*. This indeed was humane and 'generous after the injury he had done her: But the Greek translation expresses it, he *spake according to her mind*^b; which seems to intimate, as if *Dinah* herself were, in some measure, consenting, or, at least, not very averse, to his addresses. And this her yielding too readily to the temptation might probably have been the cause, why God preserved her not from falling into this misfortune and disgrace, as he had preserved *Sarah* and *Rebekah*'s virtue inviolate on a like attempt from *Pharaoh*, and *Abimelech*.—"Resist the tempter, and he will flee from you"^c.—Pray to God, and he will secure you from evil.—Young people have never more need of prayer, than on such rencounters as these.—This was the reason why *Joseph* stood his ground; and the neglect of it may be presumed the cause of *Dinah*'s fall.

^a 2 Sam. xiii.
fours this sense.

^b The Heb. is, *spake to her heart*, which favours this sense.
^c Jam. iv. 7.

4. *And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.*

5. *And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter (now his sons were with his cattle in the field): and Jacob held his peace until they were come.*

6. *And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.*

7. *And the sons of Jacob come out of the field when they heard it, and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth: because he had wrought folly in Israel, in lying with Jacobs daughter; which thing ought not to be done.*

8. *And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.*

9. *And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.*

10. *And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade you therein, and get you possessions therein.*

11. *And Shechem said unto her father, and unto*

All the circumstances here related after commission of the fact, together with the treaty proposed between the parties concerned, are conducted on both sides, not only with a remarkable Decorum and Civility, but also with great appearance of Justice.—First, The Ravisher appears not, at first, in Person, but engages his father to mediate and intercede for him. He backs not his rape with violence, nor defends one injury with another; but offers freely all the satisfaction in his power, and to give her friends whatever Dowry they should require (which in those days was wont to be given for, not with a wife).—Secondly, The father comes himself, tho' a Prince of the country, to treat with Jacob.—Thirdly, Jacob, tho' highly provoked at the indignity done to his Daughter and Family, suppresses his resentment, and held his peace, till his sons were come, with whom he might consult, what course was proper to take in so nice and critical a conjuncture.—Fourthly, The sons of Jacob, and brothers of the injured virgin, tho' they took fire at the Dishonour done

her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.

12. *Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.*

committed, or suffered, any flagrant injury, whether in point of honour or interest, that they should not give way to any sudden resentments, nor suffer themselves to be too far transported by their passions, but attend rather to the dictates of Reason; so as not to add sin to sin in defence of any injury done, nor too hastily avenge themselves for any, be it ever so great; but rather give place unto wrath, and ever leave open a door to Peace and Reconciliation.

13. *And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said (because he had defiled Dinah their sister)*

14. *And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us.*

15. *But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised;*

16. *Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell*

done to their Sister, and were grieved and very wroth, yet they gave no hasty unbecoming vent to their passion: they admitted of a treaty; they declined not a conference.—Now these circumstances, and this carriage on both sides, are useful examples to all that have

It hath often, by worldly men, been made a reproach to Religion, that it had been the cause of much mischief and cruelty in the world. But the candid inquirer will easily observe, that it is not Religion itself, but the abuse and hypocritical pretence to it that hath been the true cause of such evils.—The proposal made to the Shechemites of uniting with Jacob's Family in the same profession, and the same rites of the true religion, as well as in policy and commerce, was in itself both pious and wise.—But, alas! it was not piety or wisdom,

with you, and we will become one people.

17. *But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.*

18. *And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamors son.*

19. *And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacobs daughter; and he was more honourable than all the house of his father.*

but an implacable revenge, and wicked craft, which dictated that proposal.— Their answer was *deceitful*; not intended to promote Religion, but the more effectually to execute their bloody purpose.— Thus honesty is often made a blind for fraud and injustice; public good for private interest, outward friendship for secret hate: And yet these virtues are never condemned by any wise and reasonable man, for their being thus abused: why then

should Religion be the only sufferer in its character and credit, when by ill men made a cloak of maliciousness? Is not the abuse itself an outrage sufficient? Is it not barbarous, as well as partial and unjust, to insult Religion, only because it is Abused? We ought rather to think the more honourably of it, seeing it is judged even by ill men the best varnish to hide or set off the deformity of bad designs.— The very Abuse is a Praise.

But if ye will not hearken, &c.] This condition put upon the *Shechemites* may intimate to us, how ungenerous a thing it is to take advantage of peoples necessities, or strong passions, in order to draw them over to our party or interests; but more especially to convert them to our religion, be it ever so true. It is not fair or just in any case, to force the Will; much less in the matters of Faith. Such compulsive means may indeed increase the numbers of Professors, but not of true Believers:—A right Faith can only be grounded on a right Judgment.—God himself uses the cords of a man, that is, Conviction and Choice, to constrain us to obedience. What is
more

more than this is Violence, and may make Hypocrites, but not orthodox and sincere Christians. This condemns the practice of Papists, and that tyranny they exercise over the Consciences of such as are in their power: And, perhaps, it reproves the imposal of all Penal Laws in cases of Religion, except where Discipline and public Order are concerned.

20. *And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,*

21. *These men are peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them: let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.*

22. *Only herein will the men consent unto us, for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised.*

23. *Shall not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.*

24. *And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city: and every male was circumcised,*

But if it be a crime to force conscience in any case of distress, it is no less, but perhaps a greater sin, to comply on such compulsive terms. The Aggressors, even supposing them in an error, act on a principle of Conscience, and, as they persuade themselves, are doing God service: Whereas the Compliers, acting against Conscience, prevaricate both with God and man; than which there can be no greater sin, because both wilful and presumptuous.— No wonder then that God permitted so dreadful a punishment to fall on the libidinous and profane *Shechemites*, who on the brutal instigation of lust, and mere worldly respects, presumed, without faith, without any remorse for the crime of violated Chastity, to take upon them the profession of the true religion, and to prostitute the sacred rite of Circumcision (that Emblem of faith and repentance), even

all that went out of the gate of his city.

as they had defiled the daughter of Jacob, to serve their carnal lust, and temporal interest.—Let all Occasional Conformists think of this, and tremble.

25. *And it came to pass on the third day when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinahs brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.*

26. *And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechems house, and went out.*

27. *The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.*

28. *They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field.*

29. *And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.*

30. *And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me, to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, amongst the Ca-*

Let this dreadful judgment, which attended the sin of Impurity, and so horrible an abuse of the means of grace, be a lasting warning to us of the great danger of such crimes, and teach us not only how that one sin begets, and draws on to another, but how very properly the exhortation of the Apostle in the Epistle for this Day against Uncleannefs, is made choice of by the Church, to employ our meditations at this solemn season, “in regard of
“that repentance we are
“presumed to have entered
“upon. For no one sinful
“habit can threaten greater
“danger, or deserve a
“greater measure of repentance, than this of Lust
“and Uncleannefs.—All
“our mortifications will be
“rejected for hypocrisy and
“mockery, if we cleanse
“not ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,
“in order to perfect holiness in the fear of God.
“—But as a wise and religious exercise of Fastings,
“and

naanites, and the Perizzites:
and I being few in number,
they shall gather themselves
together against me, and slay
me; and I shall be destroyed,
I and my house.

31. And they said, Should
he deal with our sister, as
with an harlot?

“ and other acts of severity
“ and self-denial, are the
“ best remedies against all
“ sin, so they more especi-
“ ally contribute to subdue
“ those of the Flesh (I mean
“ all softness, effeminacy,
“ and self-indulgence, as
“ well as unchaste appe-
“ tites), and redundancy of
“ spirits, which ease and free-living certainly leave
“ behind. They cut off those luxuriences of nature,
“ take away the matter which the tempter’s suggesti-
“ ons work upon, and put us in a better condition of
“ standing our ground, and gaining the fort within,
“ by starving cut the enemy’s forces that lie en-
“ trenced there.” So Dean *Stanb.* on the Ep. for
this Day ^d.—And the Gospel ^e concludes with a com-
fortable and encouraging example in the humble Sy-
rophœnician woman, That our sincere, if persevering
endeavours and prayers, will at length prevail for
casting out the evil spirit of Uncleanneſs, or any other
predominant Vice.—Amen.—So be it.

^d 1 *Theſſ.* iv.

^e *Matt.* xv.





The Third Sunday in LENT.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xxxix.

P R E F A C E.

THE Church now proceeds to set before us some Acts and Instances of TRUE Repentance, in the examples of Joseph, and his Brethren.

Joseph, as the most perfect Pattern of sincere penitence, flies from the Temptation when solicited to sin; but his Brethren, after falling into a grievous crime, were not brought to a sense and acknowledgment of their Guilt, till Affliction and Distress had awakened them to see their Fault.

The first Example instructs us, how much nobler, yea, how much easier, it is to resist and subdue Temptations at their first Onset, than after a lapse to repent and rise again.

The history of Joseph's Chastity receives also an additional lustre from the foul Incontinence of his Brother Judah, as recorded in the preceding chapter.—The Elder Brother fell an easy prey to the first assault; the Younger remained impregnable against repeated attacks. The enemy was the same, namely, the Lust of the Flesh; but the
different

different frame of their minds produced the different effect.

Howbeit a late and even constrained Repentance, tho' less glorious, yet, if sincere, is not rejected of God.—This is exemplified to us in the case of Joseph's Brethren^a; and is therefore an Encouragement to the greatest offenders, to turn from their wickedness, and not despair of Mercy.

It displays likewise the great Goodness of God in bringing distress and anguish upon sinners, in order to awaken their Consciences, and lead them to Repentance, that so they might not perish.

It also doth honour to the wisdom of his Justice and Providence in suiting the Punishment of sinners to the Nature of their Crimes. The Brethren of Joseph could very legibly observe the one in the other, and were compelled to confess with one voice, We are verily guilty concerning our Brother:—Therefore is this distress come upon us. Which is as much, as if they had said, “We cast him into a Pit; so now we are to be cast into Prison:—We acted the part of Treachery and Falshood, where justice and love were due; here we are charged with falshood and wrong, where none are acted, or designed:—God verily is just, and we are guilty,” &c.

The Compassion and Mercy of God is also very movingly represented to us in that melting and affectionate tenderness of Joseph towards his Brethren. On hearing their mutual upbraidings and self-condemnation for the injury they had done him, he could not refrain from Tears; he turned himself about from them, and wept.—As this may assure us, there was not the least tincture of cruelty, revenge, or pride, in that roughness, wherewith he had treated them; but a sincere and most charitable intention to bring them to Repentance; so, much less may we think, that any of the temporal afflictions of Divine Chastisement proceed from harshness, or ill will in God, towards the poor frail sons of men, whom he

^a See the Sequel of their History, chap. xlii. and xliv.

knows whereof they are made, he remembers, we are but dust; yea, withal, considers us as the Brethren of the true Joseph, his own beloved Son.

The Third SUNDAY in LENT.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xxxix.

1. **A**ND Joseph was brought down to Egypt: and Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither.

2. And the LORD was with Joseph^b, and he was a prosperous man: and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

LEaving for a while the other Sons of Jacob in the midst of their guilt, and perhaps rejoicing therein, unreformed by the Admonitions of their Father, or Example of their younger Brother; let us proceed in the History of Joseph, and accompany the young saint into Egypt.—Here we behold his virtues not only tried like gold in the furnace, but triumphant over every Temptation, and at length over every Affliction too.—His brethrens Envy had reduced him indeed to a state of Slavery: But as, by a kind and wise Providence, this removal from them secured him from any further attempts of their Malice (“for “who is able to stand before envy?”) so it proved the means of rendring his Virtues more eminent and conspicuous, and fully justified his Father’s Love, that it was not the effect of a fond Partiality, but of real Merit.—Therefore we read, that *the Lord was with him*: God did not forsake him in his affliction; the same good hand which had bestowed on him those

^b See note at the end.

^c Prov. xxvii. 4.

excellent gifts and graces, continued with him in his state of Servitude, gave a Blessing to every thing he did, and procured him that favour among Strangers, which he wanted at Home.

3. *And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.*

His master, tho' an Heathen, could not but perceive the special influence of a Divine Power attending and assisting him in all his affairs. — 'Tis true, no Prosperity can happen without the will of God; yet every prosperity is not a sign of God's Blessing. — To succeed in a just and lawful calling, in honest and virtuous actions, to act on principles of Religion, as *Joseph* did, and *prosper*, is a mark both of Divine Favour and Grace. But where *Joseph's* principle of true Piety, Fidelity, and moral honesty, is wanting, there all success will prove according to the Wise man's remark, "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them^d."

4. *And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand.*

5. *And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptians house for Joseph's sake: and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in the house, and in the field.*

Honesty and integrity are the best and surest foundation of Credit. The Servant, who seeks to rise as *Joseph* did, must follow the Example of *Joseph's* Fidelity: And a Master can have no greater blessing in his Family, than such a faithful Servant. — The happiness of Families depends so much on the goodness of their Domestics, that Masters must be their own enemies, if they overlook the Merit and Virtue of a godly Servant. — This part of *Jo-*

^d Prov. i. 32.

Joseph's history should not only excite all Servants to the imitation of his Integrity and good Behaviour, but also reconcile them to the Meanness of their Condition.—No one is properly a Slave, but he that is the servant of Sin: A good man preserves his Freedom in the midst of servitude; and no Christian servant but must think the condition of *Joseph*, in his most servile state, was much more eligible, than that of his heathen Master:—That therefore it is greater Honour to be the Lord's freeman, as every good Christian is, than to be a Prince, enslaved to his Lusts; or a *Potiphar*, and alien from the commonwealth of *Israel*.

6. *And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat: and Joseph was a goodly person, and well-favoured.* After serving him some time, as a menial and inferior Servant, his Master advanced him to be Steward of his whole estate, with so entire a confidence in his Skill, Fidelity and Care, that he left the management of all to *Joseph*.—But mark

the Uncertainty of worldly prosperity! His Master's favour, or his own virtues, are so far from securing him from the assaults of Temptation, that they become the very Occasion of exposing him thereto.—Learn we hence ever to expect Trials, especially at our first setting out in a course of Religion, or after some great grace received. So our Lord, after his Baptism, was immediately led into the wilderness to be tempted, after his glorious Transfiguration on the Mount, was led to his Sufferings on the Cross. In like manner here, our young Patriarch, after his Advancement, is called to the Trial of those virtues, which had raised him to Honour. Thus “Gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.”

7. *And it came to pass after these things, that his masters wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.*

We are told elsewhere, that "Favour is deceitful, "and Beauty is vain"; and here we find it verified: How little then is either to be depended on! how much less to be coveted, or gloried in!—Beauty, if given of God, is indeed a Talent not to be despised; it adds a Grace to our actions, a Lustre to our virtues^f, and Eloquence to our words; but if it be not dedicated to the service of God, it becomes a deadly Poison, both to ourselves, and others. So that we may well say of it, as St. James doth of the Tongue, "It is a fire, a world of iniquity; it defileth the whole body, "and setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set "on fire of hell." *Cb. iii. 6.*

8. *But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand.*

9. *There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

What a constellation of Virtues appears in this answer, and this conduct of Joseph! Some comprise them under the four heads of the cardinal virtues; namely, Temperance, in refraining from the act of sin; Fortitude, in resisting the temptation; Justice, towards his master; and Prudence, in the conduct of this whole affair. But as the instruction, which the Church more particularly aims at in this Lesson, and at this

Season, turns chiefly on this part of Joseph's Character; namely, his Continnence, and Fortitude, in resisting of Sin; it appears necessary to consider the extraordinary force of the Temptation; and the power of that grace, by which he overcame it.—Not only

^e *Prov. xxxi. 30.* ^f *Gratior est pulchro veniens e corpore virtus. Virg.*

Opportunity; but Importunity; not only the fervour of Youth, and the Ease and Affluence he now lived in, but daily Solicitations, together with all the Endearments, that the Youth and Beauty, the Art and Passion, of a fond woman, yea, a Mistress, could invent, or express: Not only the promises and prospect of Pleasure and Profit, but the dangerous consequences of a Repulse.—These, and such as these, were the Temptations which *day by day* attacked this noble Youth; yet made no impression on his Virtue. His Gratitude for favours received, his Fidelity to his trust, his generous regard to the Honour of his Master, and even of his Mistress, as well as his own; his inviolable Modesty, but, above all, his genuine and sincere Piety towards God, secured and guarded every avenue of his soul from the fiery darts of Lust; and made him as eminent an example of Chastity, as he was of faithfulness and integrity in the duties of a Servant.—Adore we then the power of Divine Grace, which gave him the victory, and will make Us also more than conquerors in every Temptation.—Mere human strength, tho' in a state of native and unspotted Innocence, could not resist the allurements of an Apple; but Divine Grace, as here we see, stands its ground against a much more violent assault.—Of ourselves then, we cannot but fall, as *Adam* did; but “thro' Christ, and thro' Him alone, we can do “all things.” If he be with us, as he was with *Joseph*, no Temptation shall prevail: But if we trust to Nature, to ourselves alone, and our own strength, the very slightest will overthrow us.

But no Temptation is
 10. *And it came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.* quelled at the first repulse: It will renew its onsets, and attack us again and again. So our Lord in the wilderness found it; so *Joseph*, here; so

² *Phil. iv. 13.*

11. *And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within.*

12. *And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.*

wiles, or resist his fury; but in the case of *Lust*, our young Hero in the Lesson sets us the best Precedent for our conduct—rather to Fly, than to Fight:—And we may think it a wise and an happy retreat, if we get off with no other loss, than that of our outward *Garment*.—Should it prove the very outward garment of the flesh, so we escape with our *Souls*, and preserve our Innocence, the victory is cheap, and our Crown secure.

13. *And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,*

14. *That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice.*

15. *And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted*

must We expect.—And if flatteries and smooth words will not prevail, Satan will not fail to use Violence, as far as he is permitted by the Divine will: If he cannot sooth and beguile us by fair means, and under the sheep's cloathing, he then sets upon us by force as a ravening wolf, to compel or to destroy.—Other saints teach us how to defeat his

This disappointment of her criminal passion, edged with the sense of guilt, and fear of discovery, made her immediately resolve to out-face the matter, and be beforehand with *Joseph*; and so at once secure herself, and be revenged of him. Accordingly she sets up a violent shriek; raises the house; and with an artful Hypocrisy strikes in with that envy, which in all probability the rest of the servants had conceived against

up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

Joseph, that so she may make herself the more easily believed, and gain the family of her side.—Thus we see

that Love, founded in Lust, is no Love; but rather a deadly poison; it kills the soul that yields, and is deceived thereby; it pursues its own object that rejects it, with implacable malice and revenge.

16. *And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.*

17. *And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me.*

18. *And it came to pass, as I lift up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.*

cence, and lead a strictly Religious life, in an age so profligate, so generally corrupt, as these our own perillous and unhappy Times are.

19. *And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.*

20. *And Josephs master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the*

Thus this false Adulteress; and thus the base and treacherous World most commonly treats those, who will not run into the same excess of riot with them, who refuse to comply with their humours, their interests, their fashions, or lewd practices.—'Tis deemed an unpardonable Crime to fear God more than man; a fault worthy of infamy and ruin; a forfeiture of reputation, goods, and life itself, if we pretend to keep our inno-

We see here the innocent *Joseph* hurried to Prison, thro' the instigation of an enraged Adulteress, and the partial resentment of a credulous Master: But we do not hear him making any Complaints against either of them, nor any defences of his own innocence.—He is turned out of Employment, but

*kings prisoners were bound :
and he was there in the
prison.*

but repines not ; he is led to a Prison, but resists not ; he is reviled as a Ravisher, a Traitor, but reviles not again. His Place, his good Name, his Liberty, are taken from him, but he opens not his mouth.—As *Joseph*, and the wonderful occurrences of his life, are the completest and most apposite Type of our dearest Redeemer, among all the Heroes, who had the honour to prefigure him in all the Old Testament, so his Meekness and Patience bore the truest (tho' the less splendid) parallel to our Lord, in all that glorious Type.—And while we behold two such bright examples, of a suffering, yet patient, yea, silent innocence, with what face shall suffering Guilt complain ? —The truth is, none but the truly penitent can be truly Patient : none can follow such patterns of Meekness, but such as aspire after their Innocence by the salutary means and discipline of Repentance.

21. *But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*

22. *And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison ; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.*

23. *The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand ; because the LORD was*

The same Lord, who was with him in his Advancement and Prosperity, is now with him in *his Prison*—His Friends had forsaken him, his Mistress's love was turned to aversion, his Master's favour into fury : But God continues still his fast and faithful Friend. —God leaves not any that leave not him : He is ever kindest and nearest to us in our greatest need. Hence it is, that no sooner is *Joseph* in Prison, but he is the Keeper's chief favourite ;

* See note at the end.

with him: and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

nay, Keeper of the prison himself. As to Liberty, he has all but the name of it;

He hath the Use of it, but

refrains from the Abuse.—A good man is free in every state of life, but not free to do evil.—Conscience is a stronger bond than bolts and chains. What he could not do with Honour, he esteems not in his power; therefore *Joseph* quits not his prison, tho' he might. This he commits to the will of Heaven, and the pleasure of his Superiors:—And we find it proved in the end the best way of bringing it about.

O excellent Youth! O wonderful Story! how full of moral to instruct our Practice! how full of Mystery to confirm our faith! But whence sprang that noble virtue, which gave so bright a lustre to every scene of *Joseph's* life? whence but from this (which cannot be observed too often); That *the LORD was with him*?—It was the Lord that wrought all these Graces and Virtues in *Joseph*, as well as framed him to be the Type of Himself. And if it be said of *Joseph*, That *whatsoever the prisoners did, he was the doer of it*; how much more properly may the same be said of Christ, who worketh in us both to will, and to do? And, without Him, we can do nothing.—So that whatsoever *Joseph* did, whatsoever we do, that is virtuous and laudable, the Lord Jesus is the *Doer* of it all.

On ver. 2. and 21. *The Lord was with Joseph.*] This is often repeated in this chapter, and seems to imply more than barely the grace or blessing of God, which accompanied him in all his actions.—Yea, it signifies that the [very *Λόγος*, or] *Word*, even the Second Person, and ever-blessed SON of God, *was with him*;—that the LORD Christ was *with him* in a singular and special manner, as he had been with all such as in any-wise were Types of the *Messiah*, such as *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*; and afterwards with *Moses*, *Josbua*, *David*, &c. Nay, it is said by *Solomon*, His “light is to be *with* the sons of men^h.”—His Name also of

^h *Prov.* viii. 31.

Emmanuel, or *God with us*, imports the same special Presence of the Son of God with every good man; and he himself assures all his faithful Disciples, that he will always be so, to the end of the "world."—"Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the "world*."—And if he be *with us*, we cannot but be *prosperous*;—for "whatsoever the good man doth, it shall prosper." *Pf. i.*

Ibid. The *Chaldee* renders it, "The *WORD of the Lord was his help.*" So *Ainsworth*: And it is observable, that the term [*Jehovah, the LORD*] is by the *Jewish* interpreters most frequently rendered the *WORD of the Lord*.

* *Matt. xxviii.*





The Third Sunday in LENT.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xlii.

A famine in Canaan. Jacob sends his ten sons to buy corn in Egypt. They are treated roughly by Joseph; imprisoned as spies; set at liberty again after three days, upon condition of bringing down Benjamin. Their remorse and self-accusation. Simeon detained as an Hostage. The others return to their father, and relate what had happened. He refuses to part with Benjamin.

1. **N**OW when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, *Why do ye look one upon another?*

2. *And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.*

THE most fruitful land of Canaan is involved in the general famine, and Jacob himself with all his family reduced to the want of bread.—Hence we see the best of men, as well as the most flourishing conditions, are not exempt from the common calamities of life. But all such afflicting dispensations (as we shall see by the sequel of our story) lead to Mercy.—Did we live

live less by sight, and more by Faith, we should have greater cause to rejoice than to grieve, when we fall into divers Temptations ^a.

3. *And Josephs ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.*

4. *But Benjamin, Josephs brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren: for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him.*

5. *And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.*

6. *And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Josephs brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him, with their faces to the earth.*

7. *And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.*

8. *And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.*

9. *And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dream-*

In our Morning Lesson we considered *Joseph* as the most perfect example of true Repentance. But as Repentance is of two sorts, the one, a flying from and abhorring sin, Before it is committed; the other, a forsaking it After the commission; the one as grounded on a wise Forethought resisting the temptation, and eschewing of evil as hateful in itself; the other, on an After-thought or sense of guilt, regretting more the Punishment, than the Turpitude of sin; the first of these sorts, which we have seen in the character of *Joseph*, is much the nobler of the two: Yet the latter, which was that of his *brethren*, tho' a baser kind, as containing more of a servile fear, than a filial love of God, is not rejected of him. — And whereas the general corrupt state of the world, even in the Church, is such, that very few follow the example of *Joseph*; and the case of his *brethren* so very common as generally to engross the

^a James i. 2.

ed of them, and said unto them, *Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land you are come.*

10. *And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.*

11. *We are all one mans sons: we are true men, thy servants are no spies.*

12. *And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land you are come.*

13. *And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day* with our father, *and one is not.*

14. *And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies.*

15. *Hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.*

16. *Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.*

17. *And he put them all together into ward three days.*

name of Repentance, as if there were no other; yet, our Church in these Lessons hath set both kinds before us for the Instruction and Imitation of her children; the first, as the most perfect and generous; the other, as never ineffectual, if sincere: —That therefore the greatest of sinners are not to despair of Mercy, whensoever they repent. Nay, the Design of all the severe inflictions of divine justice towards great and hardened sinners, is to convince them of sin, and excite them to Repentance.

As Pride is the source, and original cause, of every other sin, we may observe, that this vice was the bitter root of all those heinous crimes, which these brethren of Joseph fell into.—They could not be ignorant of their faults, especially when admonished of them, as we may presume they were by Joseph, before he acquainted his father therewith (see Ch. xxxvii. 2.), that so the Authority of a Parent's reproof might reclaim them.—But their Pride disdaining such reproofs from a youth,
and

18. And Joseph said unto them the third day, *This do, and live: for I fear God.*

19. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses.

20. But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

21. And they said one to another, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us.*

only concern was how to deceive their aged Father, and conceal their crime.—Thus hardened in their sins, and given up to a reprobate sense, they seemed past all cure, and all hopes of Amendment.—In this state of Impenitence, had they been suffered of God to continue therein, they must finally and inevitably have perished. God therefore takes a most extraordinary method to awaken their Consciences. First, by a *famine*, he takes away the staff and stay of Bread; and reduces them, and their families, to extreme Poverty and Want.—This was a Second loud call to Repentance; but without effect: they “heard not the Rod, nor who had appointed it.” The Distress puts them only on caring for the Body, but not for the Soul. They consult, and resolve on a journey as far as *Egypt* to get Food for the famine of their houses; but
take

and not brooking this First call to Repentance, instead of reforming what was wrong, they proceeded to further degrees of wickedness:—From Pride, and contempt of admonition, they proceed to Envy; from Envy to Malice and Hatred; from Hatred, to Cruelty and Murder; and would have put their bloody purpose in execution, had they not been restrained by *Reuben*, and overruled by the divine will.—Nay, after they had cast him into the Pit, and been accessory to his being sold a Slave into *Egypt*, and to all his consequent sufferings there, we do not hear they ever repented of so cruel and unnatural an action: Their

take no thought for the bread of Life.—Here a new Affliction befalls them; which was a Third call to Repentance, more loud and alarming than any of the former; and carried in it so legible a character of their crime, as compelled them at length to cry out, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not bear: THEREFORE is this Distress come upon us.*—Conviction is the first step in Repentance; Confession the next. But this, if extorted only by our Sufferings, is not sufficient, nor sincere enough to prevail for the Remission of our Sins.

22. *And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore behold also, his blood is required.*

No greater load to Affliction than Guilt of conscience! a conscious sense of our Deserving evil, is the forest burden of Punishment:—As sin is the sting of death, so is it of every suffering; take this away, the Pain abates, and the

Burden is lightened.—This we see in the different Effect which the very same distress had upon *Reuben*, and upon the other brethren.—They felt such anguish of mind in their present calamity, as made it insupportable; but *Reuben* found a Comfort under it, because he felt a less degree of Guilt.—Involved he was in the same misfortune with them, and that justly too, because he had joined with them in concealing from his Father the truth of *Joseph's* case, and imposing upon him by a Lye, which was more afflicting to him, than the Knowledge of the whole fact would have been. He therefore suffers with his Brethren: but the reflection, that his crime against *Joseph* was less heinous, because less wilful, than theirs, was an alleviation to his sufferings; and gave him that consolation under them, which They were deprived of. Keep we therefore free from Wilful sin, and no torment shall touch us. All sin, even the least, even the

the sins of Ignorance and Infirmary, defile, and induce a guilt before God. But sins against Conscience are the more exceeding sinful, and contract the deeper Dye, in proportion to the degree of our Assent thereto. They not only pollute, but sting and wound the most vital part of the soul. The agony, which then seizes the spirit, is no other than the pains of Hell commenced, and a foretaste of the torments of the damned; which nothing can heal or prevent, but a sincere Repentance, through the merits of the death of *Christ Jesus* our Lord.

23. *And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.*

Thus sinners and worldly persons understand not the Word of God, when it is spoken to them only by an *Interpreter*, or the Preachers of his gospel.—Their language, and the language of God, is indeed very different; and therefore He seems as a stranger and foreigner to them, and Themselves to be as strange and unknown to him. They know not, they believe not, that he understands both what they say, and what they think; and therefore have no guard on their Words or Thoughts.—The first means of knowing God is by the hearing of the ear, and by the outward word preached, and interpreted; but the soul never becomes acquainted with him, till he speaks to the heart, and talks with her by his Spirit.

24. *And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.*

Joseph, tho' exalted, tho' injured, is humble, benevolent, and tender-hearted: He cannot see his Brethren's distress, and hear their self-upbraidings, and mutual accusations, without melting into Tears: But, tho' he is Mild, he is also Just. He conceals his Love, until Justice, by a seeming severity, had had its perfect work, and due effect upon them.

them.—He *turned himself about from them to weep*, that they might not yet see the tenderness of his affection: He dried up his tears, and *returned to them again*; that he might the more effectually carry on his intended scheme for their conversion, and bring them to a thorough conviction of their Sin.—He takes from them *Simeon*, and binds him before their eyes, to let them see what they *All* deserved.—Thus our Lord deals by Us his sinful Brethren; this very method he uses to reclaim us from sin: His Bowels yearn, while his Hand corrects: His very justice is directed by Love: He corrects, that he may save: He punishes, that he may be gracious:—He punishes some, that he may have mercy on all.—But if here we read, that *Joseph wept*, and then bound *Siméon*; in the Gospel we read that *Jesus wept*^b, and then bid *Lazarus* be Unbound.—“*Jesus said unto them, “Loose him, and let him go*”^c.—This difference may shew us in a figure the different effect of the Law, and the Gospel. The law delivers man up to justice, binds him, and casts him into prison; but the grace and truth which came by *Jesus Christ*, sets us free.

25. *Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them.*

26. *And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.*

27. *And as one of them opened his sack to give his*

When we come to God thro' Christ, and bring our money with us, that is to say, the fruits of our labour, and good works,—what our honest endeavours and industry have gained, he will not only supply our Wants, but render back into our bosoms the very Price we bring.—He indeed accepts our offering, but repays it again; if not always in

^b *John xi. 35.*

^c *Ibid. ver. 44.*

as provender in the inn, he espied his money: for behold, it was in his sacks mouth.

28. *And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?*

his House, his Ministers, his Service, will also be *restored* with an ample return;—often the very Principal, but always an Interest far exceeding our largest Gifts.—Let this teach us then the Wisdom as well as Duty, that we come not empty-handed before God.—Tho' he wants not our goods, yet he loveth a chearful Giver, and will never fail to reward every act of Justice or Bounty:—That therefore we ought not to give grudgingly, or of necessity, to so munificent a Master, because “with such sacrifices he owns “himself well pleased^d.”

29. *And they came unto Jacob their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befel unto them, saying,*

30. *The man who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.*

31. *And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies.*

32. *We be twelve bre-*

Kind, yet in Substance and Value; if not directly and openly, yet secretly and effectually; in a manner as unexpected as unknown. So that not only what we Lend unto the Lord, by giving of our goods to the poor, shall be Repaid us again; but also what we freely give in Tythes and Offerings, in contributions to the use of

From this passage we may learn this useful lesson, that Honesty and Uprightness in our Callings and Professions is a necessary qualification to make our Repentance effectual, and acceptable to God.

—They said, *we are true men, we are no spies.*—True men they were, as to their Dealings in secular affairs; they came not as *spies* with any evil intent, but with an honest design to trade and

^d Heb. xiii. 16.

thren, sons of our father: one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33. *And the man the lord of the country said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone.*

34. *And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that you are no spies, but that you are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.*

get Bread for their Families.—This, as to men, and in point of common honesty, was very true; they were no Deceivers, but *true men*.

—And except We also be such, when we apply to God for the supplies of Grace, and Pardon of our sins, our Repentance will be fruitless, and our Prayers of no effect.

—On the other hand, *true* towards God they were not; they had violated his law in a most heinous manner by their Envy and Malice to their innocent Brother, and by deceiving and grieving their aged Father.—The honest men of the world, who

live without Religion, are just like these Brethren: They call and fancy themselves to be *true* and honest men; and so perhaps in all worldly respects they are. But however just they may be to their Neighbours, if they be not also just to God, they are not *true*, they are not strictly Honest men.—It may intitle them to so much favour from God, as to be taken in hand, as he did these ten brethren, to chastise and correct; that so he may bring them to Repentance.—But their common Honesty, or mere Morality, will stand them in no stead, when they come before *Joseph*, whom they had injured; that is, when they appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, whom in works they rejected and denied.—We conclude then that Religion and Honesty should always go together, and never be put asunder; because where there is no Honesty, there can be no true Piety; and where Piety is not, there is no true Honesty.

When

35. *And it came to pass, as they emptied their sacks, that behold, every mans bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.*

36. *And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.*

37. *And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.*

38. *And he said, My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.*

When they and their Father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.] This effect was observed before in ver. 28. that the brethren *were afraid*, and *their heart failed them*.

Here, not only they, but *Jacob* also, when every man found his money was restored, is said to have been *afraid*.—This may presignify a special case in the discipline of repentance, and which can happen to none but such as are *true men*, and true Penitents. To such, God's mercy and goodness are so unexpected, so great and surprising, as to exceed, and almost overcome their Hopes, and their Faith. Tho' they feel, tho' they taste and see how gracious the Lord is, they can scarcely believe what they feel, to be true.

—When we look on our own Unworthiness, and have long dwelt on the horrors and guilty fears of sin, the Conscience (like *Jacob*, chap. xxvii. 12.) is so far from ex-

pecting a Blessing, that it dreads a Curse. But our heavenly Father, like *Isaac*, as if he overlooked our prevarications, and did not see our Faults and Transgressions, pours down a Blessing on our heads. The humble penitent is not only startled at the Greatness, but the Unexpectedness, of the Divine favour.—The soul, that before trembled at God's Judgments, now trembles at his Mercy: Stands astonished and confounded

founded at itself, and at God;—saying, with these brethren, *What is this that God hath done?* often repeating that of the pious *Elizabeth*, “Whence is this “to me?” Can this Blessing be to me?—Can it be real?—May I presume to accept it as designed for Me?—Am I awake, or is it not a Dream? So, “when “the Lord turned the captivity of *Sion*, then were “we like unto them that dream,” said the devout Psalmist^f; “Less than the least of thy mercies,” said the humble *Jacob*^g.—Humility, that trembles and feels this fear at extraordinary Mercies, is the very cause which draws those Mercies down.

^e *Luke* i. 43.^f *Pf.* cxxvi.^g *Gen.* xxxii. 10.



The Fourth SUNDAY in LENT.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xliii.

P R E F A C E.

IN one of the Lessons for Sunday last, we observed an instance, in the brethren of Joseph, of the conviction and remorse of a guilty Conscience, when under the sense of God's judgments:—But That conviction is only the first step towards, and but a distant symptom of, true Repentance. The Fear of the LORD is, indeed, the Beginning of wisdom; and his terrors do often rouse the sinner into a serious Reflection upon his Folly and Danger; and, perhaps into warm and zealous Resolutions of reformation and amendment. But these good motions are apt to cool again, and grow remiss, being too weak to prevail against the superior force of corrupt Nature, and inveterate evil Habits.

The heavenly Physician, therefore, when he observes this symptom of the spiritual life in the soul of man, this sense and feeling of its diseased condition, does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; he does not despise nor reject the first Relentings of a wounded Heart, but immediately applies such medicines as are most proper to advance and perfect the Cure.

Now, in the course of the Lessons before us, we behold, in Joseph's conduct towards his brethren, a most lively

representation of those gracious methods which Jesus Christ, the blessed Physician of souls, is pleased to make use of, in order to bring men, first, to a sense, and, at length, to an abhorrence and forsaking of their sins; in which two things a true Repentance doth consist.

Whom Plenty, and fulness of Bread, has made wanton and bold in sin, a Famine, or want of the common necessities of life, may compel to inquire and seek after God:—Whom impunity and forbearance has hardened in wickedness, Severity and Affliction may soften into remorse: So that, from the moral of this history, it is plain, that one great End and Design of it is to teach us the true reason of all the Troubles, Afflictions, and Crosses, which happen in the world; namely, First, That they are the necessary and unavoidable consequence of Sin, and the genuine effect of that Curse, which it brought on the whole creation, Gen. iii. 17.

Secondly, That they are the just punishment of Sin.—But then the correction is inflicted by the hand of a merciful and gracious Father, in order to lead men to Repentance, that so they may not finally perish.

These considerations should not only work in us an humble and chearful Submission to all kinds of Afflictions, because they are the most proper means for the cure of sin; but prompt us to undergo the discipline of Mortification and Self-denial, which the Church imposes on us at this time, as becomes obedient children; yea, as the wisest course for preventing those heavier Punishments, which otherwise we are to expect from the hand of God, if we shew too much favour to ourselves, and too little regard to the Order of his Church; remembering, especially at this holy Season of Penitence, that awful, but gracious Admonition, “To judge Ourselves, that so we be not “judged of the Lord:” and likewise that excellent advice of the Apostle, Heb. xii. from the first to the fourteenth verse.

The Fourth SUNDAY in LENT.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xliii.

*Jacob is hardly persuaded to send Benjamin.
Joseph entertaineth his brethren.*

1. *AND the famine was
fore in the land.*

2. *And it came to pass
when they had eaten up the
corn which they had brought
out of Egypt, their father
said unto them, Go again,
buy us a little food.*

by the special appointment of Divine Providence; and that for many great and wise Ends; the very same judgment of Famine proving the means of *Joseph's* Exaltation, the Trial of *Jacob*, and the Chastisement of his other sons for their Sin; but, in the event, was prosperous and happy to them all.—This should teach us, that all divine inflictions in this world are intentionally good, and have an aspect to Mercy.

3. *And Judah spake unto
him, saying, The man did
solemnly protest unto us, say-
ing, Ye shall not see my
face, except your brother be
with you.*

THE Famine had now continued about two years; insomuch that *Jacob's* stores being spent, he and his Family were again reduced to extreme want.—We have already observed, that this distress happened, not by mere accident, but

Reuben the elder had spoken to his Father to send *Benjamin* with them, but could not prevail; although he offered the life of Two of his own sons as a pledge and security for him, yet *Jacob's* answer to him was, “My son shall not go down with you.” But when

* Chap. xlii. 38.

Judab, the Ancestor, and here the Type of Christ, offers Himself a surety for the lad, their Father yields, and gives consent,—Who sees not here the grand Mystery of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ*? especially, if with the eye of Faith we take in all the circumstances of this remarkable transaction.

In the *First* place, Be the Famine ever so sore; that is to say, be our need of Mercy ever so great; the Justice of God hath *solemnly protested*, we shall not see his face, except we bring our *Younger Brother with us*.—Where note, that *WE*, in this Mystical sense, are to be considered collectively, as in, and one with, our First Parent *Adam*; and Christ to be considered as the Second *Adam*, and so the *Younger Brother*; under which character he is frequently typified in holy Scripture, as by *Abel*, *Jacob*, *Joseph*; here by *Benjamin*; afterwards by *David*, *Solomon*, &c. who were all Younger sons of their parents, and by the divine will preferred to the Elder.—There is no coming to God, but by Him; no food for the famine of our houses, except we bring Him *with us*, and that too in the quality of *Younger Brother*; i. e. not as God only, but as Man also.

Consider, *Secondly*, as a check to human Pride, Though with *Reuben* (who, as Elder brother, was the emblem of Nature) we offer the dearest pledges we have, our own Sons; nay, should we offer Two for One, to be a Propitiation and Atonement for us; it will not avail, nor be accepted. “No Man,—no
“mere man, or Numbers of men, can deliver their
“brother, nor make agreement unto God for us;
“for it cost more to redeem our souls^b.”—None but He, who was of the tribe of *Judab*, can pay that great, that infinite ransom.—If we bring Him, the ever-blessed *Jesus*, with us, we shall obtain the Bread of Life, and the Mercies which we want, of Pardon and Peace.

^b *Psalms* xlix. See also *Micah* vi. 7.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, On Benjamin's coming, *Simeon* was set at Liberty, a Feast made, their want supplied, the price remitted; and afterwards *Joseph* is made known to his brethren.—Thus (if our Faith penetrate thro' the Letter, into the Allegory and Mystical sense of this history) when the true *Benjamin*, the Son of God's right hand (as that Name ^c imports) accompanies our devotions, our confessions, and penitential addresses at the throne of grace, we shall not fail to receive in substance and reality what is here represented in Figure: The captive shall be set at Liberty; every penitent soul, that hath attended *Christ* in his sorrow and temptation, shall be comforted, feasted, rejoiced; and a mournful *Lent* shall terminate in a joyful *Easter*.—So be it, O Lord, according to thy word! for thou hast said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted ^d."

4. *If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food.*

5. *But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you.*

6. *And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?*

7. *And they said, The man asked us streightly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him ac-*

If we take this discourse which passed betwixt *Jacob* and his sons in a moral sense, we cannot but observe the partial and wrong byass, which mere Natural Affection gives sometimes to the best of men; and see how blind to the true interest of our Children a fond and passionate Love is; as well as repugnant to Reason, and even to the will of Heaven.—But if we consider this passage in its mystical and spiritual meaning, we may conceive it to be a contest between Grace and Nature. The first urges us to comply with the Divine will;

^c Gen. xxxv. 18.

^d Matt. v. 4.

according to the tenour of these words: Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?

8. *And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones.*

9. *I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.*

10. *For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.*

Live, and not Die, both we and thou, &c. But *Israel* (who, in the Allegory before us, personates Nature, the old man within us, the *Israel* after the *Flesh*), instead of yielding to the motions of Grace, grows angry at the proposal of taking his darling from him; cannot part with what he loves, without grief and reluctance: No, though it be to save the Life of Himself, his Children, and his Family: Nay, he charges, as a fault, as an injury, at least as an indiscretion, what, in the event, proved the greatest Mercy and Happiness to him and all his family;—*Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man?* &c.; the unreasonableness of which complaint, and disorder of his mind, most perfectly agrees with the character of a person under the influence of Passion and Nature; it being as contrary to right Reason, in the Moral sense, to charge his sons with plunging him into this difficulty and misfortune (as he thought it) as it resisted

represents the benefit and advantage of resigning our own thereto; and that drawn from the following topics; First, The Blessings of Obedience, which are signified by *Food* and *CORN*.—Secondly, The joys of Heaven, and beatific vision, implied in that expression, — *their seeing the face of the man*.—

Thirdly, The Misery consequent on our neglect or refusal to submit to the commands of God; namely, inevitable Death, and a certain rejection from the presence of God, as is strongly expressed in that home Argument which *Judah* urges to his Father, *That we may*

sifted the will and disposition of God in the spiritual Sense and Design of this extraordinary dispensation.— Upon the whole, we learn by this Example, how necessary, yet withal, how hard, it is, to bring Nature to submit to the dictates of Grace, the Flesh to yield to the Spirit: We see how overswayed, sometimes, the best of men (even a *Jacob*) may be, by the hurry of Passion, and force of natural affection.—How jealous then ought we to be over our hearts, when Nature only, or carnal Reason, pleads; and, in all actions and deliberations of consequence, to take good heed that no Love rule^e and sit umpire there, but Charity, and the will of God.—Fourthly, This whole transaction does, in a most lively manner, represent the present state of the *Jews*.—*Jacob*, now in the decline of life, bears the image of that obstinate and unbelieving People.—*Jesus*, his Son after the flesh, is advanced to be Lord of the whole World, as *Joseph* was of *Egypt*; but he believes it not; he knows it not; he lingers and delays the time; he will not part with what he had set his heart upon; tho' perishing with hunger (a *famine* not of bread, but of the word of God), even he, his sons, and their little ones.—Nevertheless, at length he is prevailed upon to go to *Joseph*, and to see his son before he die.—O may this latter part of our history be verified in the Call and Conversion of the *Jews*, as the former hath been in their impenitence, and rejection of their *Messiah*!—May the blessed *Jesus*, at last, be made known to them, as *Joseph* was to his brethren!

Jacob thought the Governor of *Egypt* might be pacified with Presents, as *Esau* had been. And the present he sends, though small, yet was such as Ca-

II. *And their father* *Israel* said unto them, *If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and*

^e St. Paul expresses this by the word *Βραβειον*, Col. iii. 15. which signifies properly, to be an umpire.

carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds.

12. *And take double money in your hand: and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight.*

13. *Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man.*

14. *And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin: If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.*

naan produced, and Egypt did not yield; therefore of value, and likely to be acceptable.—Thus, every one that cometh to God, must have something of his Own to offer; and none must appear before the Lord empty^f;—not with an empty Hand, much less with an empty Heart.—Be our poverty ever so deep, a willing mind will always find something to bestow on God, that shall abound to the riches of our liberality, and be an “odour
“ of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto him^g:”—Not that he desireth a gift, much less stands in need of our Presents; but he desires fruit

that may abound to our account. He seeks Our profit, not his Own; for “our goods are nothing
“ unto him;” yea, if we bring our passions and affections, nay, our very sins and infirmities, which are the peculiar fruits, and most natural products, of our Own land, and offer Them up to him, the oblation shall not be rejected.—None are so poor, but may make such a sacrifice as this; and few, alas! so Good, but that their sins are to them as *balm* and *honey*, *spices* and *myrrh*, *nuts* and *almonds*. But who is there that follows this Example of *Jacob*, till the kind hand of Providence compels them, by some sharp Affliction, to part with their beloved Lusts, and petty Interests, for the inestimable treasures of Heaven, and its exceeding weight of Glory?—Even a *Jacob* puts it

^f *Exod. xxiii. 15.*

^g *Phil. iv. 18.*

upon an invincible Necessity; he cannot prevail upon himself to yield, till there was no help for it, no resisting any longer.—*If it must be so* (or, according to the *Hebrew*, *If it be so*); if it be so indeed; if it be Absolutely necessary.—Howbeit, we are not from hence to think, that God, by such providential dispensations, does ever Necessitate the will of man; but rather, like a wise Physician, applies Affliction as the only proper Medicine for curing its blindness and prejudice, as well as to awaken the Conscience.—And when, by this means, its native Freedom is restored, it will then, of course, make a right and prudent Choice: So that the Will is not forced, but rectified, by Affliction.—And blessed be the Hand, and welcome the Remedy, which works such a Cure! Happy the Necessity that brings us to ourselves; that constrains us to judge, determine, and act aright, in the grand concern of our eternal interest!—"Before I was troubled, I went wrong, said *David*; "but now I have kept thy word^h." And every Christian has good reason to say with *St. Paul*, "We glory in tribulationⁱ," &c.

When we come to God with the tender of a sincere heart; that is, with Repentance towards him, and Restitution to our Neighbour, and with a true Faith in Christ (as these brethren came to *Joseph* with their present, with double money also in their hand, and with *Benjamin*; we may have confidence towards God; have free access to the throne of Grace, as they had to *Joseph*; and assure our hearts, that we shall obtain mercy as they did, and find grace to help in time of need.

^h *Psalms* cxix.

ⁱ *Rom.* v. 3.

"*Joseph*"

16. *And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon.*

“favourable, if our Actions answer to our Professions.”

17. *And the man did as Joseph bad: and the man brought the men into Josephs house.*

18. *And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Josephs house, and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time, are we brought in; that he may seek occasion^k against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bond-men, and our asses.*

19. *And they came near to the steward of Josephs house, and they communed with him at the door of the house:*

“Joseph lays aside his assumed Severity, when it appeared his brother Benjamin was safe; being now satisfied, that the men were sincere in what they professed.—In like manner we shall find our Judge

These men, whose Consciences, by the seeming harshness of Joseph's carriage towards them, had been brought to reflect on their former Guilt, expected little less than to be taxed and treated as cheats, for the money returned in their sacks; and this fear was the more increased by their concern for Benjamin, for whose safe return they stood engaged to their Father. Therefore, before they entered the house, they came near to the steward, and endeavoured to clear themselves of any fraud, which might be imputed to them, in relation to that money; and in te-

^k Heb. *roll himself upon us*; i. e. lay this charge, with all its weight, upon us. In which sense it is used, *Psalms xxxvii. 5.* “Roll thy ways upon the Lord;” i. e. lay the whole weight and burden of thy affairs upon him: Or, as the old translation, which our church chooses to retain in her Liturgy, has rendered that Hebrew phrase,—*Commit thy ways unto the Lord*——

20. And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food.

21. And it came to pass when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and behold, every mans money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

stimony of their Honesty, they tender the sums again, which they had found in their sacks, besides other money for their further supply. — From the surprize and terror, which seized these brethren upon this occasion, we may observe the very malignant nature of every great and mortal Sin; that it not only adds weight to our afflictions, but embitters every Blessing; it raises a suspicion against the very Goodness and Mercies of God; fills the heart with jealous Fears, and misgiving apprehensions, concerning our spiritual state and condition. — *Joseph* intends his Brethren a special Favour, even the Honour of dining with him; but their guilty Conscience interprets it all as a design to fall upon and enslave them. — How ought we then to fly from Sin, especially every Wilful and Deadly sin, that leaves so lasting a Sting behind; that even after Repentance, Restitution, and Confession, will not give way to Comfort, but throws a damp on our Courage, and blasts our Hopes! And as the lasting Remembrance of any flagrant and notorious Crime weakens our Confidence towards God, even while we Repent, so it often makes the death of a sincere Penitent to have many times more of Fear than Hope; more Pain than Joy and Comfort¹.

This

¹ St. Ambrose (*de Josepho Patr.*) applies the moral of this passage, concerning the brethren of *Joseph*, to the case of the Jews rejecting the offers of Christ. — *Advertant Judæi quem Dominum negaverint, &c. Priorum conscii delictorum non credunt tantam Christi esse misericordiam, ut condonet peccatum, remittat injuriam; ideoque præfigurantur*

23. *And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.*

This brings to mind that passage in the book of *Job*, where *Elibu* describing a poor sinner under the punishment and guilt of sin, “when his soul draweth nigh unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers;”

he adds, “if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom^m,” &c.—Thus here *JOSEPH*’s steward is the emblem of Christ’s Minister, who invites us into his Lord’s house, to eat with him, and partake of his dainties.—If at that time our Conscience labour under the burden of any known Sin, or any scruple arise, let us imitate these Brethren of *Joseph*, apply to the Steward of Christ’s mysteries, and “open our grief; that by the ministry of God’s holy word we may receive Absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of our Conscience, and avoiding all scruple and doubtfulnessⁿ:”—And then may we hear those comfortable words in our lesson, directed to us, even us also, *Peace be to you, fear not.*

bantur in patriarchis quales essent futuri. Invitabantur ad gratiam, ad salutaris mensæ vocabantur convivium, & calumniam sibi parari, insidias fieri suspicabantur, & cœperunt ad hominem qui erat supra domum in janua domus causam suam agere velle: Adhuc dubitabant introire, & ex operibus suis malunt justificari,—quam gratiam accipere, &c.—To a Christian reader, this note may seem of little use, but should it providentially fall into the hand of a *Jew*, under such a circumstance as *St. Ambrose* has above described, it may, through divine grace, prove a blessing: And God grant it may!

^m *Job xxxiii. 23, 24.*

ⁿ See the exhortation in the Communion office.

24. And the man brought the men into Josephs house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet, and he gave their asses provender.

As Joseph is the type of Christ, his House must be the emblem of the Church; and, consequently, the Water given the Brethren, will be the figure of Baptism.—

And as this water represented that which is given for the mystical washing away of sin, so the Time and Circumstance of bringing it in correspond with the Order and Course to be observed in the Sacrament of baptism.—Repentance, and the answer of a good Conscience, must precede, before Baptism be administered.—This is the Order prescribed in the Gospel, and constantly observed by the Church. So St. Peter, “ Repent, and “ be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of “ sins .”—But if, after baptism, we fall into the mire of sin, and be again defiled (as who lives and sins not); still, water is necessary to wash away its guilt, even the waters of penitential Tears.—Our asses also are taken care of; these beasts of burden, our bodies, are not neglected by our noble and most hospitable Lord.—If we come under the shadow of his roof, he will not fail to give them Provender; he will feed them with food convenient for them; but as for the Soul, he feasts it at his own table with the bread from Heaven.

25. And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house,

The antients never approached their Kings, or great men, without Presents, in token of their Duty and Respect.—A good Lesson, that we are not to come empty to our Lord’s Table; but with our hands full of good works, and with a ready mind.—A free-will Offering,

and bowed themselves to him though never so small, is to the earth. ever acceptable to our Lord.

But tho' the Gift be ours, the Entertainment is his^p.—The Manner also of presenting our gift is here intimated, and should be carefully observed.—It must not be offered abruptly, irreverently, or unseasonably; but be *made ready*, and prepared, against *Joseph* come at noon; it must be both in proper Time, and with due Respect.—*They bowed themselves to him to the earth*, when they offered their present.—Obeisance joined with internal worship is the tender of our Whole selves: Both the Body and the Soul, as well as our Gifts and Oblations, must be offered up at Christ's Altar.—And this sacrifice, of what we Are, and what we Have, is “our reasonable service^q.”

At this interview of *Joseph* and his Brethren, we find that Dream of his fully accomplished, That his Father and Brethren should do him Homage.—His Eleven Brethren (now *Benjamin* was come) *made their Obeisance* to him in Person: And that part of the dream, which concerned their Father, was fulfilled by the answer and

Reverence they made to *Joseph*, in their father's Name, styling him his *Servant*, and, at the same time, bowing their Heads;—*thy servant our father is in good health, &c.* and *they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance*.—Now, what does this punctual Recording of the Accomplishment of that prophetic Dream intimate to us, but that Divine Honour and Worship is to be paid to the Holy JESUS, now sitting at the

^p *Nos munera inferimus, ille instaurat convivium.* Ambros. de Josepho, pag. 390.

^q *Rom. xii. 1.*

right hand of God, in the glory of the Father; even as He himself hath said, that "All men should honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER"? —And that too for this important Reason (which also inculcates the absolute Necessity of paying such Divine and Equal Worship to the SON); "He that honoureth not the SON (to wit, as he honours and adores the Father) honoureth not the Father which hath sent him." —'Tis remarkable also, that the Dream was repeated; *First*, the Sheaves bowed to him, then, the Sun and Moon and Stars, to teach us, that All things should be made subject to him; and that, "at the Name of JESUS, Every Knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the earth."

29. *And he lift up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.*

30. *And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.*

31. *And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.*

32. *And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for*

Omitting, for brevity, many fine Allegories, and moral reflections, which Joseph's kind reception and entertainment of his Brethren suggest; some of which having also been touched upon already; let us consider only his conduct towards his Brother Benjamin. —He sees him amongst them; he knows him; he calls him *Son*, he blesses him, he weeps; he sends him messes from his own table, *five times so much* as to any of the rest. —Now if we regard Benjamin as the emblem of Grace, which, with respect to Nature, is the *younger brother* (as before observed), we may hence

¹ John v. 23.

² John v.

³ Phil. ii. 10.

the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33. *And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.*

34. *And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.*

learn, there is no admission, or welcome to Christ's Table, except we bring Grace with us.—Grace is the beloved of the Father, the genuine Brother of Christ, his [*frater uterinus*, and] mother's son; of whom may be said, what is said of the *Messiah*, "The dew of his birth is of the womb of the morning;" *Psalms* cx. For Grace also is the offspring of eternal Goodness before all time, and the offspring of divine mercy, begotten of the womb of the Church in due time; in both respects resembling its Elder Brother the holy *Jesus*.

In the character and treatment of the ten Brethren, who may here be considered as persons in the class of Penitents, we may learn, that Repentance and Confession do intitle to a place and portion at the holy Table; but innocence and grace intitle to more than a double portion of favour: So also saith Christ, "To him that hath shall be given."^u—*Joseph* had before tried the Honesty and Veracity of his brethren; had seen their Humility and Patience, their Self-accusation and Repentance: He now, by this distinguishing preference shewn to *Benjamin* the youngest of them all, tries their Benevolence and Charity, wherein they had failed towards himself: And we read, *the men marvelled one at another*; we do not read, that they Envied.—Repentance, if true and unfeigned, thinks not itself worthy of Any favour; therefore

^u *Matt.* xxv. 29.

feels no Envy at what is shewn to another : It may *marvel* and admire at God's goodness to others, but still thinks itself less than the least of his Mercies. And this humble and charitable Disposition is the best and surest symptom of a sincere Repentance.

Let us conclude our Lesson with the glorious character which St. *Ambrose* gives us of the holy *Joseph*.
“ He was innocent in the house of his Father, and
“ patient in Affliction ; faithful in Servitude, and
“ chaste in Temptation ; had Wisdom to interpret
“ secret things, and Prudence to foresee future
“ events ; was just in correcting his Brethren, and
“ piously kind in the entertainment he gave them.
“ In a word, as he was a lively Emblem and Type
“ of the life and character of the blessed *JESUS*, so
“ he is a worthy Example for our imitation.”





The Fourth Sunday in L E N T.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xlv.

Joseph maketh himself known to his brethren: comforteth and speaks kindly unto them: sendeth for his father: furnisheth them with necessities for their journey; and exhorts them to concord. Jacob is revived with the news.

1. **T**HEN Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me: and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians, and the house of Pharaoh, heard.

3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: Doth my father yet live? and his brethren could not

MANY fine and instructive reflections arise from the moral of this affecting story of Joseph's discovering himself to his Brethren. But as the main design of the Church hath been, hitherto, to point out to us the progress, and several steps, of Penitential Discipline; that is, doubtless, the great End, which, in this Lesson, we are chiefly to have in view.—In the character and persons of the brethren of Joseph, we now behold the humble

answer him: for they were troubled at his presence.

4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you, to preserve life.

6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest.

7. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9. Haste you, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not.

10. And thou shalt dwell

humble Penitent, not only brought to a thorough Conviction of the guilt, and extreme danger of Sin; but prostrate on his knees, with deep sighs, and streaming tears, imploring for Mercy and Forgiveness.—The true Joseph, the holy and com-

passionate Jesus, can no longer withhold the overflowing torrent of his Grace and Mercy: His bowels yearned before, to see the signs of Repentance and Contrition; he wept for joy, to observe the first symptoms of Humiliation and Remorse; and can no longer contain from expressions of Peace and Reconciliation.—

But let us observe attentively, in this important Emblem, for our comfort and instruction, the whole process of that Pardon, and plenary Indulgence, which the Saviour grants to every soul duly humbled by proper Discipline, and sincerely Penitent.

—First, He reveals himself by a sudden and surprising influx of Light, and at once makes himself known to be the Saviour:—*I am Joseph*, or, as he himself said afterwards in Person to his Disciples, terrified at the sight of him, as he walked upon the sea,

in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy childrens children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast.

11. *And there will I nourish thee (for yet there are five years of famine); lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.*

12. *And behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you.*

13. *And you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither.*

14. *And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.*

15. *Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that, his brethren talked with him.*

and supposing him to be a spirit, "It is I [even I, Jesus, your Saviour]; be not afraid."—But this first discovery of himself to the Soul, is an holy transaction, that the World cannot see, and passes only between him and the Conscience.—So we find, Joseph cried, *Cause every man to go out from me: And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known to his brethren.*—Secondly, The soul starts back, as these Brethren did, at so unexpected a declaration, surprised and astonished.—Sin and Guilt dread the sight of him, whom we have offended, basely treated, injured, sold.—Conscience again flies in our face, and we are ready to turn away from him, as unworthy of any Pardon.—But he sweetly entreats our nearer approach, and bids us dismiss our fears. So Joseph's Brethren were troubled at his presence, and could not answer him; but he said unto them, *Come near to me, I pray you: And they came near.*—Thirdly, Christ pours in his Comforts into the soul, as before he had his Terrors; and freely suggests the grounds of Hope of Confidence, and holy Assurance; saying, as it were, "I am GOD indeed, and so the just object of your Fears; but I am MAN also; therefore, by community of Na-

ture, loving and humane: Yea, *your brother*:—
“Ye sold me indeed, for the mean and empty gratifications of Sin, and so violated that endearing Relation; but I am still your *brother*, still affected with the same brotherly kindness towards you as ever, how unkindly soever you seemed to deal by me.—But *be not grieved*, nor [too] *angry with yourselves*, that you sold, or so used me as you did; *for God did send me*, &c.—My Sufferings, though caused by You, have been the means in God’s hands, to *preserve life*, to effect your salvation, to Redeem you and all mankind from Death.”—
Fourthly, This consideration of God’s Love is of the utmost consequence to the humble Penitent, to the end he may not be swallowed up of over-much sorrow, and sink into Despair. The Saviour therefore, under the character of *Joseph*, repeats it again and again; saying, *God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance: So it was not You that sent me hither, but God*, &c.—Fear is the beginning of Repentance, but Love and Gratitude the Perfection of it.—We indeed dishonour God by our Sins, and deserve to Die; so saith the Law:—But Christ assures us, that Grace shall abound much more by our sin, if so be we Repent:—That God, in Christ, will bring good out of this Evil, even the greatest Good out of the greatest Evil that ever was committed, the putting the Son of God to death.—And this is said to assuage the torment of Fear; to raise the Penitent, first to Hope, and then, to that perfect Love, which casteth out that tormenting Fear.—Fifthly, The next step in the course of a true Repentance, is a full and right Faith in JESUS CHRIST; that is to say, to know Who he is, and What he is; not only what he is to Us, a Brother; a Man; the Man *Christ Jesus*; born of a Woman as we are, cloathed with Flesh, and of the same Nature with us; that he died and suffered for us; but likewise, What he is in Himself, even the

Second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity, highly exalted above all principalities and powers, King of kings, and Lord of lords.—And this is also typified to us in the character of *Joseph*: He was *second to Pharaoh in the kingdom, Lord of all his house, and Ruler throughout all the land of Egypt*.—Sixthly, A sole and intire dependence on Christ for all the good we have, or hope for; our present Support, and future Happiness: That through him every Blessing is derived to us from God: That, to be *near unto him, and with him*, is the completion of true Felicity. This likewise is prefigured to us in those words of *Joseph*, *Come down unto me, tarry not; and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, &c. there will I nourish thee, &c. lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty*.—Seventhly, The next advance in the school of Penitence, is the communion and fellowship of the Holy Ghost; to hear and understand the word of God; to have *seeing Eyes, and hearing Ears*; to know and apprehend what proceeds from the mouth of Christ:—And this is signified to us in that saying of *Joseph*; *Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you*; that is, to the Soul coming to Christ with deep remorse, and sincere Repentance, Christ speaks Peace, not so much by an interpreter, by his messengers and ministers, as immediately and directly by Himself; according to that saying, “Ye shall be taught of God.”—Eighthly, The last and most consummate degree, the very completion of a genuine and perfect Repentance, is conversing freely with God; not only hearing him speaking to us in his Word, and seeing him in his Works; but Talking with him in Meditation and Prayer.—This also is described by the reciprocal endearments of love and joy, which passed between *Joseph* and his brethren. *He fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them*:

them: And after that [after these mutual expressions of Affection and Reconcilement] his brethren talked with him.

16. *And the same thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.*

17. *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan.*

18. *And take your father, and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land.*

19. *Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you waggons out of the land of Egypt, for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come.*

20. *Also regard not your stuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.*

21. *And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them waggons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way.*

22. *To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment: but to Benjamin*

From the 16th to the 25th verse, are represented to us, the blessed Effects of a sincere Repentance.—First, It produces a joy in Heaven, as well as in the Church upon earth.—*The same thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house; and it pleased Pharaoh well, and all his servants.*—Secondly, As it is a returning to God, it assuredly brings us to him, and to his kingdom, that where he is, there we shall be also.—So Pharaoh commands, *Take your father, &c. and come unto me, and I will give you the good of the land, &c.* It is not, we see, a bare invitation of Christ, to come and partake of his glory; but a command of God the Father also to him, to bring us to his Kingdom. *Now thou art commanded, &c.* said Pharaoh to Joseph.—

“This Commandment, saith Christ, have I received of my Father.”—Observe we, Thirdly, The Means of Grace afforded us of God, to facilitate our coming, and assist our weakness: This is represented to us. by the Waggons and Carriages provided

he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.

23. And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

vided for them, and for their little ones.—Fourthly, The next Effect is, Heavenly-mindedness, taking off our Thoughts and Affections from the things of this world, and setting them on the things that are above; for so ver. 20. *Regard not your stuff*; or, as the Hebrew expresses it, *Let not your eye spare*, &c. Be neither anxious nor grudging for what you part with for Christ's sake; nor sparing or solicitous for what is to come.

—And that, Fifthly, Because, if we seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, All these things shall be added unto us.—For so, *Joseph* gave them not only *Waggons* to carry them, but *Provisions also for the way*.—Sixthly, We are to add to our faith Virtue.—This, saith St. *Ambrose*, is meant by the *changes of Raiment*.—These, both to clothe and adorn him, must every man have; but to *Benjamin* (who is here the Type, as well as Ancestor of the great St. *Paul*; consequently of every true preacher of the Gospel) are given not only *three hundred pieces of silver*, to enrich him; but *Five changes of raiment*; to shew us the greater degrees of Perfection, as well as Glory and Honour, which God confers on faithful and laborious Ministers.—Seventhly, *To his father Joseph sent after this manner; ten asses*, &c. to set us an Example of the honour and regard, which the true convert pays to his Parents of every kind, whether spiritual or temporal; but especially to his heavenly Father, by bestowing liberally of his substance for his use and service.—Eighthly, The last and most perfect effect of a true Repentance, and what crowns all, is Charity: *See that you fall not out by the way*.—

The

The Gospel also dictates to us the same Lesson; for so the Apostle; "The end of the commandment" (*i. e.* the ultimate aim and design of the divine "law") is Charity^b." And Christ himself makes this the criterion and surest mark of true Christianity; "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another^c."

Here the scene changes,

25. *And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father,*

26. *And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacobs heart fainted, for he believed them not.*

27. *And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived.*

28. *And Israel said, it is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.*

and represents to us the Patriarchs as types and emblems of the Apostles, and first Preachers of the Gospel.

—They are first sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; they tell them of Jesus who was dead, and is alive; of his Exaltation and Glory; that He is Lord of all.—But, alas! who believed their Report? The Jews heard the glad tidings of Salvation, but received it not.—So here, Jacob's heart faints at the news, as incredible and untrue; he believes not his own Sons. Nevertheless, as the Brethren did faithfully tell their Father all the words of Joseph, so the Apostles, and

first messengers of Christ, "shunned not to declare" "the whole counsel of God^d." They preached faithfully and constantly that Gospel they had received, even all the words of Christ.—But as Words alone did not persuade Jacob, till he saw the Waggons;—then we are told, *his spirit revived*; then he believed, and said, *It is enough*: So, many of the first converts to

^b 1 Tim. i. 5.

^c John xiii. 35.

^d Acts xx. 17.

the Christian Religion seeing the Word seconded by Miracles (which St. *Paul* calls the Demonstration of the Spirit^e), they readily yielded to those evidences of Divine Power. But if such miracles were ocular proofs and demonstrations to Them, they ought to be rational and convincing Arguments to Us; who, though not seeing, yet read the sacred Records of those facts, and first Evidences of Christianity. As the Scripture which relates them, is the word of God, every good man will find his *spirit revived* and confirmed; every modest man will say with *Jacob*, *It is enough*.—These waggons, and preparations for conveying *Jacob* and his family into *Egypt*, together with the *provisions* for their sustenance *by the way*, are also proper representations of the Means of grace, which Christ hath appointed in his Church, for conducting us to Heaven.—And O, let us once more pray, that the discovery of *Joseph* to his Brethren may also be the happy Omen and Type of the general Conversion of the *Jews*, and prefigure the Manifestation of Christ to that hitherto incredulous people. Amen, Amen!

And as the restoration of *Joseph* to his Father and his brethren, in a state of so great glory, may likewise represent the article of our Lord's Resurrection (*Jacob* receiving him again, as *Abraham* did his son *Isaac*^f; in a Figure); we may conclude with a pious reflection of one of the fathers, on those words of *Jacob* in ver. 28. “The first and greatest Fundamental of the Christian faith, saith he, is to believe the Resurrection of Christ. For whosoever believes, that Christ is risen from the dead, will hasten to seek him, will devoutly approach him, and adore God with the inmost affection of his soul.—For he that believes in the Author of the Resurrection to life, will also believe, that he himself shall not die eternally.”

^e 1 Cor. ii. 4.^f Heb. xi. 19.



The Fifth Sunday in L E N T.

Proper Lessons for { M. P. *Exodus*, Chap. iii.
E. P. ——— Chap. v.

P R E F A C E.

OUR blessed Lord, while he sojourned upon earth, was wont to convey his doctrine in Figurative speeches; and afterward, in the absence of the multitude, he expounded to his Disciples the sense and meaning of what he had delivered to the rest in Parables^a. But as the time of his Passion drew nigh, he spake more clearly concerning himself, and the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven^b, insomuch that they confessed, “Lo, now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb;” “by this we believe that thou camest forth from God^c.”

In like manner, we may observe, that, in the course of her Proper Lessons for this Penitential season, the Church seems to have imitated her sacred Master in this thing also; and to follow the same Method of instruction.

Till now, she also hath been speaking to us as it were in Parables: She hath led us, hitherto, by figures and shadows of things to come; obscurely, and in a Mystery, foreshewing the promised Redeemer under the several types, of Beasts skins, the Rainbow, the Offering up of Isaac, Jacob's blessing, Joseph's sufferings and exaltation: And on last Sunday (to animate our hopes, and strengthen our

^a Mark iv. 34.

^b John xvi.

^c Ibid. ver. 29.

faith in the great and most comfortable article in all our creed, the Forgiveness of sins) the love of Christ was most pathetically represented in the affectionate and forgiving Character of Joseph.

In this day's Lessons the glorious scene opens still more clearly: God himself descends; throws by his types and figures, and comes in Person to visit and redeem his people.—So that henceforward, in the remaining Lessons for Lent, we find the LORD himself transacting the great affair of their Deliverance.—And it is no less worthy our notice to observe, with what harmony all the Scriptures, which the Church hath selected for this day's Service, do conspire to lead us on to the last scene of Christ's sufferings; and consequently, to fit and prepare us for the Benefits and Merits of his Death and Resurrection.

The Fifth SUNDAY in L E N T.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

EXODUS, Chap. iii.

The call of Moses to be the Deliverer of Israel.

1. **N**OW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

THE King of Egypt, who had sought the life of Moses, being dead, and the time, determined of God, approaching for the Deliverance of his people from their Bondage, Moses is called forth from his retirement to be the instrument of so great a Mercy.—He had now for Forty years kept the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro; and consequently, by the nature, as well as hardships of the Pastoral life, was trained up, and prepared for executing the Office, to which God designed him, of a faithful

faithful shepherd to his own people.—The court of *Egypt* had educated him in the wisdom of the world, and in all the Learning, which Human Arts and Sciences could bestow: But his best School was the Desert; for this was the school of God. Here he learned Virtue and Piety, Patience and Submission. Nay, here it was he Unlearned the soft indulgence, pomp, and vanity, which the daughter of *Pharaoh* had bred him up with.—In order to wean him from the world, it was necessary to take him from the pleasures of a Court: To teach him Humility, he must be stripped of his Honours: To purify his Mind, he must be led to the *Mountain of God*: To qualify him for a Divine commission, he must be inured to an holy, severe, and contemplative Life: To make him a King in *Jeshurun*, a Leader of *Israel*, he must be long disciplined in the Labours and Cares, the Watchings and Patience, of a poor Shepherd.—And such are still the wise Methods, which divine wisdom and goodness uses to prepare us for his service, and to fit us for himself.

2. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

As our blessed Lord was wont, in the days of his flesh, to retire to Deserts, and solitary places, for the better opportunities of private Devotion; so we may well presume, the pious and humble *Moses* led his flock to the *back-side* of the desert, as the most secret and retired place, for the holy exercise of Prayer and Contemplation.—Here, in all likelihood, he was pouring out his soul in earnest and devout Intercessions for his poor afflicted Brethren in *Egypt*, when this great and glorious Vision appeared to him.—A *Bush*, all on fire, and yet, *not consumed*! He saw the fierce and rolling flame had seized on all its branches, yet not a branch destroyed!—The Tree
with

with every twig, with all its leaves, remained still flourishing and green! the lambent flame brightened the *Bush*, but did not consume it!

3. *And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.*

His curiosity was raised at so strange a *Sight*.—And no wonder that *Moses*, a man learned in all the *Egyptian Learning*, should go, as a Philosopher, to consider what might be the natural Cause of this extraordinary Phænomenon.—But when he approached to observe it, he found GOD there.—Thus the study of Nature leads wise men, and true Philosophers, to the knowledge of the Creator.—The works and powers of Nature are but secondary, intermediate Causes; GOD is the first and supreme efficient Cause, on which every other must necessarily depend. To Him therefore the Chain^d of all subordinate causes ought ultimately to lead us, and to Him alone the Glory should redound.

4. *And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.*

*And when the LORD saw,—God called.]—*By this we are most assuredly informed, who the *Angel* was, that thus appeared in the flame of fire, and spake to *Moses*. No Created Angel certainly, but Christ the Lord, even the Angel of the Covenant^e; the Angel of God's Presence^f; the Angel that redeems us^g; even He that was afterwards sent of God the Father to be the Saviour of the world.—Here he is expressly stiled GOD; yea, he calls Himself, *The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; and

^d For this reason the Bishop of Cloyne calls his book on Tar-water, *Siris*, i. e. a *Chain*, because from so seemingly inconsiderable a subject it leads us up to God. ^e *Mal. iii.* ^f *Jf. lxiii.* ^g *Gen. xlviii. 16.*

assumes the peculiar incommunicable name of J E-
HOVAH, and I A M ^h.

5. *And he said, Draw not nigh hither : put off thy shoes from off thy feet : for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground.*

Curiosity in Divine things is bad ; because it savours too much of natural wisdom : But it may serve well for an Herald, or forerunner, to rouse the attention, and introduce us to the knowledge of heavenly Truths :—Temerity is much worse ; because it proceeds from a want of Reverence. Both such mistakes are provided against in *Moses*, by the mercy and preventing grace of God.—It is not safe to approach God without a due sense of our infinite Distance and Unworthiness : Therefore saith God, even to *Moses*, *Draw not nigh*.—Tho' he *call*, and command us to come ; nay, tho' we be ever so holy and pious ; yet too great a Forwardness, either in devotion or knowledge (which are the only ways we have of drawing *nigh* to God), is displeasing to his Majesty.—Humility and Repentance set the just bounds to both.—To adjust therefore this Ceremonial (as it were) between GOD and Man, and to make it a standing Precedent to all succeeding generations, the Lord is pleased to say to *Moses*, *Draw not nigh hither* ; to teach him, and us, Humility :—He adds, *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet* ; to shew the necessity of Repentance.—*Draw nigh*, we may : but not, *hither* ; not too near, to pry into the secrets of GOD, or too curiously search into the mysteries of heaven ; much less with our *shoes* on ; i. e. with our sins and pollutions about us.—*The [very] Ground whereon thou standest is holy* ; much more should We be so, when we come into his presence, to the *Place* where his honour dwelleth. All things that belong to God are holy : His House, his Sacraments, his Word, &c. is *holy Ground* ; and not to be trodden upon with our *shoes* on ; that is to

^h See note at the end.

say, with any thing filthy, brutal, or deadly, about us; whereof, *shoes*, made of dead Beasts skins, and sullied with *Mire* and *Dirt*, are a significant emblem.—When we come then to God, it must be with the profoundest Reverence, and the greatest Purity. Our Affections at least, which are called the Feet of the soul, must *put off* all carnal Lusts, all impure Desires, all worldly Thoughts, all earthly, vile, and groveling pursuits.—And to this the Wise man alludes, when he saith, “Keep thy Foot when thou goest into the
“ House of God; and be more ready to hear, than
“ to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not
“ that they do evil¹.”

6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, that is, of thy father *Amram*; and this is said, that so *Moses* might be assured, that the God, whom his own father (not whom the *Egyptians*) worshipped, and in whose religion therefore he had himself been privately instructed by his true parents, was the true God.—The impressions of education determine very strongly to the religion our parents professed, and taught us: But what a joy must it be to be fully assured, that the faith we have received from our parents, and been trained up in, is the orthodox and true faith!—We indeed have not the express articulate sound of God's own voice to assure us hereof, as the holy *Moses* had; much less may we build our confidence on any secret impulses from within, which are often fallacious, and always uncertain, signs. But we all have the *Burning Bush*; that mark is ever present, and always sure. If our faith stand the test of the fiery trial, of afflictions, or persecution, and repel the darts and temptations

¹ Ecclef. v. 1.

of our spiritual enemies, we may then with comfort conclude it to be genuine and sincere; and that God, of a truth, is our God.

Further to confirm this faith in *Moses*, the Lord adds, that He is *the God of Abraham*, of *Isaac*, and of *Jacob*; the very same God, whom their first ancestors served and worshipped.—If it be demanded, why God is here pleased to stile himself by the Names of those three Patriarchs, it is commonly answered; Because to each of them he had antiently promised the land of *Canaan*, and renewed his Covenant with them severally.—So that hereby *Moses* might be assured, not only that He was the same God his Forefathers served, but that his Mercy and Truth towards the house of *Israel* were still the same; that he had not forgotten his Promise, but was now come to fulfil it.—If it be further asked, Why God is named Three times here, the GOD of *Abraham*, the GOD of *Isaac*, and the GOD of *Jacob*; we may piously answer, It is partly to intimate the great Mystery of the Trinity, in whose triune Name our holy Covenant of grace and mercy is made, ratified, and confirmed; partly to denote the special Providence of God so signally auspicious towards each of these Patriarchs in their respective times; as also to point out to us the distinguishing Example of every one of them for some singular grace and virtue.—*Abraham*, as eminent for his Faith and Obedience; *Isaac*, for Purity of mind, and Innocence; and *Jacob* for Patience and Constancy. And if in these graces we imitate Them, we also shall have Their God for Our God.—*Moses hid his face; for he was afraid, &c.*] So did *Elijah* with his mantle^k: So do Angels with their wings, before the Lord's glory^l. Which action being a symbol of Reverence, we are hereby taught, that the Glory of God is too bright for any Creature with open face to behold. Thus God is represented by our *English* Poet,

^k 1 Kings xix. 13.

^l Is. vi. 2.

———Invisible,
*Amidst the glorious brightness, where he sits
 Thron'd inaccessible, but when he shades
 The full blaze of his beams, and with a cloud
 Drawn round about him like a radiant shrine,
 Dark with excessive bright, his skirts appear;
 Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.*
 Milton.

Moses at first was bold; he goes towards the bush to behold this strange appearance: But hearing GOD was there, he *hid his face, and was afraid*.—This suggests a sentiment of great use, to repress the fond presumption of spiritual Pride; and may plainly shew, that the more God revealeth himself to man, and the nearer man draweth unto God, the greater will be his Reverence, and holy Fear; the deeper his sense of his own Imperfections and Unworthiness.—God's Glory is the best instructor in Humility; and Humility, the best contemplative of God's Glory.—While we are at a distance from him, and see him not, we are too apt to say with the proud Pharisee, "God, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men are;" or with the lukewarm *Laodicean*, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing^m." But if God approach, and lift up the light of his countenance upon us, then we soon see, how wretched and poor, how blind and naked we are; then we hide our faces, as *Moses* did; we are ashamed of our vileness, and tremble at his Word.

I have surely seen,—I have heard,—I know,—I am come down, &c.] With what vehemency and celerity, as well as certainty, and divine compassion, is this mission of

7. And the LORD said, *I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their*

^m Rev. iii.

task-masters: for I know their sorrows.

8. *And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey: unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.*

9. *Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.*

10. *Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayst bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.*

are they, but such as are in actual Covenant with him; who have duly avouched the Lord for their God, and whom the Lord hath reciprocally avouched for his *People*?—These have a rightful claim to the covenanted mercies of God; and *Jesus* is no *JESUS* to save any, but such.—“He saves his *people* [his *PEOPLE* “Only] from their Sins.”

Again, altho’ his *people*, even the Best of them, are not exempt from affliction; yet, none but They have an authentic assurance of deliverance from it, because their chief affliction is their Sin. Yea, every

Deliverance uttered! God sees, hears, and knows our afflictions at all times; but the precise time of Relief is determined by his wisdom, When, and How, it shall be.—So here, when the time was fully come for Redeeming his people from *Egyptian* slavery, he comes down in Person to deliver them. Let this teach us to wait with Patience for God’s mercy; let it fill us with faith and full assurance of Hope, that in his due time he will not fail to put an end to our sufferings, and save us out of trouble.—But withal observe we also the Limitation, which is couched in the words [*My people*] which is not sufficiently, or generally, attended to; to wit, that those only have a title to this deliverance, who are his *PEOPLE*.—And who

ⁿ See Matt. i. 21.

affliction, more especially that of sin (whatever the world may think, or Satan insinuate to the contrary) is one of the sure marks, that They are the *People of God*.—"In the world (saith Christ to his disciples, "and to all his faithful Followers) ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Therefore the great Apostle pronounces so decisively concerning the very different Issue which afflictions will have on those, who are the Friends, and those who are the Enemies of Christ, where, speaking of sufferings, he saith of them,— "which to our Adversaries are an evident token of perdition; but to Us of Salvation, and that of God."

11. *And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?*

Before *Moses* left *Egypt*, he took upon him to be a ruler and a judge over his Brethren, supposing they would have understood, that by his hand God would deliver them^a. — But now, when God himself sends him on that very errand, he cries, *Who am I?* &c.—How common is this conduct, even in good men, to run before they are called; to be very forward to set Themselves on work in the greatest matters; but to be backward and diffident, when God commands! —So preposterously strong are we in our own weakness; so cowardly and weak in our only strength, the grace and assistance of God!—Thus *Peter's* zeal was itout enough to attack a whole multitude, when pushed on by the heat and transport of his own spirit; but his heart and his faith failed him, when called upon to own his Master.—Thus *Moses*, in *Egypt*, was undaunted and bold; but tardy and fearful at the *Bush*, when commissioned of God to execute the design of delivering his brethren.—And indeed, if we take a view of all the Heresies and Schisms, which have ever

^a *John* xvi. 33. ^p *Phil.* i. 28. ^q *Acts* vii. 25.

happened in the Church, as well as all the irregularities and defects of Duty in private life, we shall find the main spring hath been this heady high-minded conceit of Self-sufficiency; this natural averfeness of the human will to the plain and positive will and commands of God.—Nevertheless, if we view this reluctance of *Moses* in another light, we shall discern a very useful Example in this behaviour of his.—He had now been forty years a student in the school of Christ; he had by this time learned, what all the Learning of *Egypt* could never have taught him, to know Himself; had acquired what no Human wisdom, much less the splendor and glory of a Court, could have inspired him with, Humility.—This makes him, who forty years before had projected the deliverance of his brethren, and boldly attempted it, now to decline so great a design, and cry out, *Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh; and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?*—Every word breathes Humility, and a modest sense of his own Insufficiency; and may well reprove the too forward ambition of those men, who thrust themselves into sacred or civil employs, before they be duly qualified, or lawfully called.—But still this humility in *Moses* was too partial to be perfect. The sense of our own Defects is indeed very necessary, to make us lowly in our own eyes; and so far is a good foundation of humility; but faith in God's absolute sufficiency must be added to consummate and complete it.—Self-knowledge, if alone, or solely adverted to, will sink us into Dejection, and damp our courage; but the Knowledge of God superadded thereto, will open our eyes to see our strength in Him: So that we shall be able to say, with the great *St. Paul*, “Such trust have we through Christ to Godward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves; but our Sufficiency is of God.”—“Without me, saith Christ, ye can do nothing.”

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 4, 5.

² *John* xv. 5.

—But I can do all things (saith our Apostle, and so may every humble and true Believer) through Christ “which strengtheneth me.”—Hence we may conclude, that Humility without Faith is too timorous: Faith without Humility too hasty, and presuming:—The conjunction of both is the true Christian Fortitude.

12. *And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.*

To cure the Diffidence of Moses, and improve his Humility, God promises *to be with him* in the execution of his Commission. And what can be too hard for man, when aided by Omnipotence? The more conscious we are of our own Feebleness, the nearer we are to Almighty help.—*Certainly, I will be with thee.*—God delights to “choose the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty; and the things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.”—Moses himself was no fit instrument for the great work of delivering *Israel*, till he had learned to despise himself, and exchanged the glittering advantages of worldly wisdom and grandeur for the contemptible employment of a poor Shepherd:—Then, saith God, *I will be with thee.* The divine presence supplies every Defect; gives Courage to undertake, and Strength to execute, the greatest things.—So the same Lord chose poor illiterate Fishermen to convert the world, and made them the same promise of, “Lo, I am with you, &c.” to enable them to do it.—Moreover, when God engages his Presence to strengthen our Weakness, he commonly grants a Sign to confirm our faith;—*This shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee, &c.* Man is naturally too weak to obey without cooperat-

† *Phil. i. 13.*

‡ *1 Cor. i. 27, &c.*

ing grace; too slow to Believe without some visible Sign:—God is pleased to indulge us in both.

13. *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his Name? What shall I say unto them?*

This Question of *Moses* is one of the most important in the world;—to know God, and, in consequence thereof, to know ourselves, being the highest wisdom, and chief felicity of man.—But the way to know GOD, is, first by his works of Creation:—In these his Being is clearly seen, in

these “his Glory is declared” (see *Rom. i. 20. Ps. xix. 1.*)—Secondly, by his *Name*, or attributes; by this we shall know who, and what, he is in Himself; all his Names being expressive of his essential perfections, and most incomparable excellencies.—But, Thirdly, it is by his SON only, that we most clearly and savingly know him; that is, both what He is in Himself, and what he is to Us; that he is not only a GOD of Justice and Power; but a God of infinite Love and Mercy, a Saviour, a Redeemer, and mighty Deliverer; a Rewarder also of them, that diligently seek him.—The Name which expresses this, is that which he most delights in; and therefore has set it above every name, not only of things in heaven, and things in earth, that is, above every name of all created beings, but even of God also;—and that Name is, JESUS.—This will help us to understand the answer given to the question of *Moses*, as also apprise us which of the Divine Persons it was, that was speaking to him.—From out of the Bush he styles himself by the Name of I AM; when he came since then, in the flesh, to save his people from their sins, he assumed the same Name (see *John viii. and chap. xviii. &c.*); but he assumed it in the name and person of JESUS; that so (as our church hath most fitly chosen the gospel even of this very Sunday to expound her Lesson) we

may be fully assured, that this JESUS, and that I AM, are the very same Person, the very same God.

14. And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my Name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

16. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt.

17. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

I am, &c.] The *Hebrew*, form is in the future—I will be that I will be. The Greek renders it, *I am He that is*^x: And it implieth not only the Essence and Existence of God, that he hath a real Being; yea, that He is Being itself; but that he hath all the Perfections that being is capable of; and particularly that such perfections are therefore in him Unchangeable, and Eternal. All other beings are but the creatures of this original self-existent being: He is *Ens entium*, the fountain and author of every other essence. So that He alone can truly and properly say I AM THAT AM (as the pious Bishop Beveridge rightly renders it), or, *I am He that is*, according to the Septuagint; or that can truly affirm what is still more expressively implied in the *Hebrew*, *I will be that will be*. Christ, indeed in order to assert his true and proper Divinity, and to prove himself the same God, who had spoken to Moses in the bush, assumes the same stile, and often saith, I AM; but the Creature, as in it-

^x Εγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν.

18. *And they shall hearken to thy voice : and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and you shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go (we beseech thee) three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.*

self, must ever answer, as *Peter* did on his defection from Christ, *I am NOT*.—But, no creature, how excellent soever, can at all say, *I will be*.—It is a prerogative peculiarly essential to the Divine Nature to say, *I will be*. He alone, that ever was, can truly say, *I ever will be*.—As for Man, “he is a thing of nought^y ;” whatever he hath, or is, in present, he is, and enjoys it all in God ; “for in “him we live, and move, and have our being^z.”—It would be the highest presumption for him to say, *I will be*.—God is an eternal Now ; and must be always what he is ; man, ever changing, is not yet what he will be ; is not now what he was ; has no command of time, much less of Being ; therefore cannot pretend he *will be* That, which, as yet, he is not. But Christ assumes this peculiarly Divine Name and privilege in its utmost latitude ; and calls himself not only *I AM* (*John* viii. &c.), but *ALPHA and OMEGA*, the *FIRST and the LAST* (*Rev.* i.) ; so that being (as the apostle testifies of him) the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, we must conclude him truly and properly *J E H O V A H*, the *L O R D* of all things, God blessed for ever. And how comfortable must this Name be to the afflicted *Israelites* ; that He, who was the God of their Fathers, He who had shewn such distinguishing marks of favour to *Abraham*, to *Isaac*, and to *Jacob*, was still, and ever would be, the same good and gracious *G O D* to Them !—Not like the *Egyptian* Gods, their heifers, *Isis*, &c. who every now-and-then died, and were to be replaced again, but the Living and Immortal God,

^y *Psalms* cxlii.

^z *Acts* xvii.

who was immutable to his Promises, and unalterable in Goodness, as he was eternal in his being.—How reviving also to the penitent soul, at this time, must it be, to reflect that this GOD is Our GOD for ever and ever; that he is still good and gracious; that he “changeth not; that his mercy endureth for ever!”

19. *And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no not by a mighty hand.*

20. *And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.*

On the other hand, those, who as ministers, parents, masters, &c. have to do with hardened and impenitent sinners, may from hence draw a lesson of Comfort. God knows the hearts of such, that they will not turn or repent; he sees that all good instructions and endeavours will be lost upon them; nevertheless, he will have them preached unto, taught, instructed, and re-proved. And let not the labourer in this barren ground be discouraged, or cease his charitable office; God will not measure our Reward by the Success. How vain soever the attempt may prove to a gain-saying and disobedient people, it shall not be in vain to the faithful Instructor:—Nay, the more his pains, and the less his present success, the surer and greater will be the Reward, to compensate the disappointment.—Perhaps, in process of time, he will have the comfort to find, even in this life, his labour hath not been in vain in the Lord.

21. *And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, ye shall not go empty:*

22. *But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that so-*

How thankless soever, and injurious oftentimes, the wicked shew themselves towards those who seek their Conversion; yet God can, when he pleases, turn their malice into kindness and favour, though, at the same time, they refuse to repent of

journeſh in her houſe, jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye ſhall put them upon your ſons, and upon your daughters; and ye ſhall ſpoil the Egyptians.

of their ſins.—The worſt of men, when convinced of the love and ſincerity of him that reproves them, cannot but revere, and have a ſecret value for the good-will and friendſhip deſigned, however they themſelves may

hate to be reformed.—So that for encouragement of our perseverance in the great and glorious work of Reformation, God is often pleased to verify the ſaying of the Wiſe man; “He that rebuketh a man, “ ſhall afterwards find more favour, than he that “ flattereth with the tongue.” So here we ſee the *Egyptians*, that were ſo long averſe to the *Iſraelites* departure, at length became profuſely liberal, and even urgent to haſten them away.—One uſeful remark more we may not omit:—How eaſy was it for the *Iſraelites* to come into *Egypt*; but how difficult to get out! So nothing is eaſier than to fall into ſin; nothing harder, than to riſe again; yea, nothing leſs than Almighty Power can poſſibly deliver us.—Conversion is one of the greateſt of Miracles, becauſe it is a change of nature.

^a *Prov.* xxviii. 23.

Ver. 4.] *Theodore* is very clear and expreſs in expounding this appearance to be the appearance of GOD the SON. *Univerſus locus demonſtrat Deum eſſe qui loquitur; dicitur angelus, ut cognoscamus, quod is, qui viſus eſt, non eſt Deus Pater (cujus enim angelus eſſet Pater?), ſed unigenitus Filius, qui magni conſilii eſt angelus, &c.* “The whole paſſage, ſaith he, ſhews it was GOD, who ſpeaks “ here. He is called an *angel*, to let us know, that it was not “ God the Father (for whole angel or meſſenger could the Father “ be?) but the only-begotten Son, who is the angel of the great “ counſel of God; even he that ſaid to his diſciples, All things “ which I have heard of my Father, I have declared unto you. “ And as the Scripture gives him the Name of *Angel*; not meaning thereby to rank him with the other miniſters of God, but “ to denote the perſon of the only-begotten SON; ſo again it “ ſeteth forth both his nature and his power; where it tells us, “ he

" he said, *I am that I am*; and again, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,*" &c.—Thus *Theodore*.—But to obviate the objection, which some might raise from the Name of *Angel* here used, and afterwards by *St. Stephen*, *Acts* viii. 30. may we not say, that the *fire* which appeared in the bush, was the *Angel*; but he that spake, was God the Son? According to that saying of the *Psalmist* (as if he had an eye to this very place), " *He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire* *." Now, that he who spake out of the fire was GOD, appears very evidently by the form of expression in the *Hebrew*, as well as from the tenour of the words; the very same form of speech being here used as occurs in the account of the creation, *Gen.* i. where a verb singular is joined with a noun plural:—A plain indication to every true and orthodox believer, that he who here called to *Moses*, was one of the persons in the *Elohim*, who created the heavens and the earth: And who should the person be that speaks, but the WORD? Wherefore we may safely and most orthodoxly conclude, from this mysterious passage, as we before observed, that the *fire*, representing the *Shechinah*, or glory of God in the bush, was an *Angel*; that the LORD, who called and spake to *Moses*, was the *Logos*, the Word and Son of God; the *Elohim*, the Three Divine Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity, which, *quoad se*, always act conjunctly; being never separated in action and energy; though, *quoad nos*, that is, in office, *secundum œconomiam*, and with respect to us, they are, and ought to be, distinguished.

* *Psalms* civ. 4.





The Fifth Sunday in L E N T.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

E X O D U S, Chapter v.

Moses and Aaron present themselves before Pharaoh, and deliver their message from God. Pharaoh chideth them; and instead of dismissing the people, increaseth their tasks. The people upbraid Moses, as the cause of their new hardship; he expostulates with God.

I. *A*ND afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

2. *And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*

3. *And they said, The*

THE Church having long dwelt on the subject of *Repentance*; from this day forward, her Lessons for this season seem to direct us chiefly to the exercise of *Faith*, as the next necessary step towards our Redemption.—In the Morning Lesson, God the Saviour reveals himself to *Moses*; that is, he appoints an Order of men to publish the word of Salvation: Here, by the Ministry

God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

4. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

5. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and you make them rest from their burdens.

saith the Lord, &c. that is, if we reason with them out of the Scriptures, their answer is, in effect, the same with that of Pharaoh, *Who is the LORD?*—*We know not the LORD.* Nay, instead of letting us go to serve the Lord, *i. e.* permitting us to serve him freely and quietly, it hath ever been the way of Satan, and his Partizans, not only to send us back to our *burdens*, but to do all they can to increase them; to impose more heavy tasks, and raise up more grievous afflictions and persecutions against us.

6. And Pharaoh commanded the same day, the task-masters of the people, and their officers, saying,

7. Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let

Ministry of Moses and Aaron, he preaches the Gospel to Pharaoh, that is, to the World. But the world knows not God: The world, which we are to renounce, is ignorant who the LORD is; neither will it let us go to serve him, until, by the mighty power of God, it be compelled to dismiss us.—Whether by Pharaoh we understand the Prince of this world, or the World itself, it comes to the same thing.—To such persons as are influenced by the spirit that is in the world, the word of God hath no weight.

If with Moses we say, *Thus*

The making brick without straw is a most significant emblem of the devil's service. The Israelites made not these bricks for their own use and benefit, but for Pharaoh, to build him strong towns, treasure-cities, &c. (see

them go and gather straw for themselves.

8. And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them; you shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle: therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God.

9. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein: and let them not regard vain words.

10. And the task-masters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.

11. Go ye, get you straw where you can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

12. So the people were scattered abroad, throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw.

13. And the task-masters hastened them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily tasks^a, as when there was straw.

14. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaohs task-masters had set over them, were beaten,

(see chap. i. ver. 11.): They worked not only in filth and mire to make their bricks; not only in bondage and bitterness; but with most unreasonable rigour, without any allowance of straw to burn them.—So, in the works of sin, we contribute only to strengthen Satan's kingdom; are used like slaves; receive no recompence, but stripes and blows, shame and misery; and, in the end, death eternal for our wages; for “the wages of

“sin is death” (Rom. vi. 23.)

“sin is death” (Rom. vi. 23.)

A Question may arise, Why God suffered Pharaoh to aggravate the bondage, instead of relaxing the servitude and hardships of the Israelites.—It was, doubtless, his Wisdom to suffer it; that so, by the grief of such inhuman treatment, they might be the more willing and desirous to quit Egypt:—That he might also have the opportunity, by his

^a Daily tasks.] In the Hebrew is, *Opus diei in die suo*; and grown a proverbial saying: See Erasmus's Adagia.

and demanded, *Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task, in making brick, both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?*

15. *Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants?*

16. *There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and behold, thy servants are beaten; but the fault is in thine own people.*

judgments and plagues upon *Pharaoh*, and his people, not only to convince the *Egyptians*, that he was the True God; but to convince his own People likewise, and thereby confirm them in the true Religion.—By their dwelling so long among that idolatrous nation, they had been much corrupted, and almost forgotten the LORD God of their Fathers; which made that part of the Lord's commission to *Moses* highly necessary, that he should teach them the NAME of the true God, even because they

were grown ignorant of it. It likewise appeared afterwards, by their making the golden calf, how much they were infected with the *Egyptian* Idolatry, which consisted chiefly in the worship of a Calf.—The case then of this people, when in *Egypt*, was much the same as it was when Christ came in the flesh: They were greatly degenerated from the Religion of their Fathers, and had need to be taught again the right knowledge of the true God.—This also is the case of all great Sinners, when they come to repent; they have need to become as little children, not only in humility, but in learning again the first Principles of the doctrine of Christ.—Neither are words only, and preaching to them the Gospel, sufficient for this end; the rod also, that is, Afflictions and sufferings, are usually applied by the heavenly Teacher and Physician of souls, to correct those evil Habits, and purge away those pollutions of the world through lust, which obscure the eye and light of Faith.

17. *But he said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go, and do sacrifice to the LORD.*

18. *Go therefore now and work: for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.*

19. *And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish ought from your bricks of your daily task.*

20. *And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh.*

21. *And they said unto them, the LORD look upon you, and judge; because you have made our favour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.*

22. *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil-entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me?*

23. *For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy Name, he hath done evil to*

Ye are idle, said Pharaoh.
So worldly people count all the exercises of Religion to be mere idleness and folly: All Time spent in the service of God is thought vain and lost: All Business and Pleasure, but that of the World, is reckoned foolish and impertinent.

Novices and Beginners in Religion are like these *Israelites*; they are soon tired or discouraged, if they meet with any Difficulties.—Like the rocky ground in the parable which lacked moisture, “They receive the word with joy; but, having no root, they for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away.”—Let the unreasonableness of that Impatience, which the *Israelites* expressed on this occasion, be a cure, or a check, to ours.—Yea, may it prove an instruction to us, that the best preservative from all impatience under trials, is to expect them, according to the advice of the

^b Luke viii.

this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

Wise man, "If thou come to serve the Lord, pre-

pare thy soul for tempta-

"tion."—Make we but this use of those *Israelites* case, it will turn the edge of every sudden distress; nay, "we shall rejoice when we fall into divers temptations^d."—Even good men, as we see here in this part of *Moses's* conduct, are too apt to repine, when they suffer themselves to be surprised.—St. *Augustine* indeed interprets the words of *Moses*, not as a Complaint, or repining against God, but as a Prayer: But it seems rather a querulous expostulation, and savours more of Diffidence and Impatience, than is consistent with a pious and humble submission to the will of Heaven.—But, alas! it is the nature of man to murmur and complain, if our hopes be deferred; and things succeed not immediately according to our expectations.—*Moses* (as well as the *Israelites*) seems to have flattered himself, that upon the Message from God, and producing his Miracles as Credentials of his Mission, *Pharaoh* would forthwith have released them from their bondage: But this is not God's method, as we before observed.—Man is too perverse to be trusted with Liberty, or even with Grace, on his first setting out in the ways of God.—The Sincerity of the heart must be tried; for this cause the tempter is permitted to attack us with stronger temptations than ever, when we go about to break his chains. But if *Moses* did amiss in repining at this first repulse, he did well in returning to God, and making his complaint, not to Others, but to Him.—Let this example teach us, that whenever our Frailty falls into Discontent and Uneasiness under the hand of God, we should avoid publicly venting our griefs, as the *Israelites* did, but rather, with *Moses*, return to God, and pour out

^c *Eccclus. ii. 1.*

^d *James i. 2.*

our complaints before him. So did *David*, the man after God's own heart : " In my trouble, saith " he, I will complain unto my God ^e." So *St. Paul*, when buffeted by the Messenger of Satan, he applied himself to God for relief, and besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him.—But the Answer was (and he acquiesced in it), " My " Grace is sufficient for thee ^f."

^e *Psalms* cxviii.

^f *2 Cor.* xi. 8.





The SUNDAY next before EASTER.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Sunday begins the holy Week of our Lord's Passion; for which reason our Church hath thought fit to honour it as a Privileged day, with First and also Second Proper Lessons, both for the Morning and Evening service; viz.

First Lesson	} for Morn. Prayer,	{	Exod. Chap. ix.
Second Less.			Matt. xxvi.
First Lesson	} for Even. Prayer,	{	Exod. x.
Second Less.			Heb. v. to ver. ii.

All these Lessons (than which none could be more Proper) are so full of matter, that it will be difficult to collect the substance of them into any reasonable compass. But if we confine our thoughts to the principal instruction, which the Church seems to have in view at this Season, we shall observe, that,

By the subject of the two First Lessons, which is a continuation of God's Plagues upon Pharaoh and his people, we are taught, that every man, in a state of Nature, is in a state of war and enmity with God; he knows not God; he knows not who the Lord, the Redeemer, is:—That therefore Punishment, and a continuance of judgments and correction, becomes a necessary discipline; while the heart persists in Rebellion, and will not let us go from the burdens and drudgery of Sin, to serve the Lord our God.—Nevertheless, from the tenour of the whole, it is obvious

obvious to observe, that how severe soever the Chastisements of God in this world may seem, they are ever temper'd with mercy, and graciously designed to lead us to Repentance; but that, if we repent not, Mercy must and will give place to Justice, and deliver us up to Destruction. For as divine justice is seasoned with mercy, so Mercy itself is ever perfectly Just.

In the Second Morning Lesson, and likewise in the Gospel for the day, we are taught the great mystery and method of our Redemption by the Sufferings of Christ, and the all-sufficient Merits of his Death.—And to inculcate this important and peculiar article of the Christian Faith, the grand Sacrifice, which our Lord offered up for the sins of the world, is every Day, for this whole Week, represented to us by the four Evangelists.—And, forasmuch as the full and adequate Satisfaction for sin depends on the Merit of that sacrifice; in order to obviate all possible doubt or scruple, concerning the Validity thereof, the Church, in her Epistle for the day, sets before us that strong and express declaration of the infinite Dignity of our Saviour's Person, and consequently of his Merits; “That altho’ he took upon him the Form of a Servant, “ became obedient unto Death, even the death of the “ Cross, he was nevertheless as truly God, in the Form “ of God, as he was truly Man in the form of a Ser- “ vant; and that therefore he thought it no robbery to “ be equal with God.—But because he emptied himself “ for the sake of man, and made himself of no reputa- “ tion; God (that is, the Godhead, or Divine nature, “ which is essential to him) hath therefore highly exalted “ him, and given him a Name above every name, that “ at the name of JESUS every knee should bow”, &c.” —And if things in Heaven, things on Earth, yea, things under the earth, even the Devils themselves, shall be obliged to bow the knee, and do homage to the holy Jesus, shall our hearts be more obstinate and inflexible than they?—For so in truth must all be, who, at this

time, when the Sufferings of the Son of God are daily represented to us, are not melted into a godly sorrow for, and sincere abhorrence of, those Sins, which cost the blessed Jesus such bitter Pains; so cruel, so ignominious a Death!

Another consideration therefore, which at this time should employ our meditations, is the danger of Obduracy, and the fatal consequence of neglecting the means of Grace, because it naturally leads to final Impenitence and Perdition.—To warn us against this danger, the Church sets before us, this day, three remarkable examples of such Impenitence, in the characters of Pharaoh, Judas, and the Jewish Rulers.

Note, This Sunday is commonly called Palm Sunday, because antiently the Gospel was taken from Matt. xxi. wherein our Saviour's triumphant entry into Jerusalem is related; on which occasion the multitude cut down branches of the Palm-tree, and strewed them in the way. The Palm being a tree sacred to Peace, this action was looked upon as a fit Representation of that Peace and Reconciliation, which our Lord was then about to make between God and Man.

The SUNDAY next before EASTER.

Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

EXODUS, Chap. ix.

A continuation of the plagues of Egypt.

1. **T**HEN the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

THE Plagues mentioned in the foregoing chapters, were chiefly inflicted by the ministry of Moses, and the stroke of his rod; but most of the following judgments are from the

the immediate hand of God himself. This proceeding represents to us the common method of his Justice in punishing Sinners.—First, He sends smaller judgments, and uses the agency of Men: Then, if they repent not, he adds the severer strokes of his Own hand; and every judgment, which produces not a Reformation, is usually succeeded by one more grievous.—It is therefore our wisdom, to attend to the first Warnings of divine wrath.—Is our *Rod* turned into a *Serpent*? That is to say, are the props and stays of life turned into Evils, and become dangerous? Are our Friends changed into Enemies, our Blessings to a Curse? This is a call to us, to Consider our ways and Repent.—Is our water turned into blood? Do our rivers produce *Frogs*, our dust *Lice*, our air *Flies*?—That is, are the common Necessaries, as well as Comforts, of life withdrawn? Then may we be assured (if so be we are guilty of any wilful sin) that the judgment of God hath taken hold of us, and the plague is begun.—But if these judgments fail of their intended Effect; greater still, and more severe Punishments are to be expected.—Thus every mercy rejected, provokes a fresh and more heavy infliction: Yet, such is the divine goodness, every Affliction is a fresh invitation to Mercy.—God grant us the grace to hear his rod, and the very first call of his judgments, lest mercy itself consign us, at length, to the greatest judgment of all, Obduracy of heart, and a final Impenitency!

2. *For if thou refuse to let them go, and wilt hold them still,*

3. *Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which is in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the*

If the *frogs, lice, flies*, that is, the lesser crosses and vexations of life, have no effect to reclaim us, the next prescription of our heavenly Physician is, some real Loss, some signal breach on our Estates. He suffers our Goods to be wasted, our cattle, &c. to be destroyed.—

sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain.

And that this is God's usual way of proceeding with mankind, both in our private and public capacity, may appear by the permission he gave Satan, to make his first essay of trial, on *Job's* estate, his sheep, his oxen, &c. before he touched his Person. Nor were the Heathens insensible of this procedure of Divine Justice, with regard to public Communities, as is evident from that passage in *Homer's* description of the Plague amongst the *Grecians*:

*On mules and dogs th' infection first began;
And last, the vengeful arrows fixt in man.*

Iliad I.

The Poet had very justly observed, that this plague was a punishment sent from Heaven, for the impiety of that people: And then he wisely and piously remarks the Benignity, as well as justice, of the divine being, in *first* inflicting some lesser evils, that a timely Repentance might prevent the greater.

4. *And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel, and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all that is the childrens of Israel.*

This murrain of the cattle was the greater judgment on the *Egyptians*, in two respects: First, As they were worshippers of some of those Creatures. Secondly, As the *Israelites*, for whose sakes these judgments were sent, were wholly exempted: So that the *Egyptians* suffered both by their Superstition and their Envy, as well as in their Interest.—The more attached we are to the things of the world, the more afflicting will be their Loss: It is not the value of the things themselves, but our mistaken opinions, which make them considerable enough to affect our quiet. And where Covetousness and Envy, the love of the World, and the hatred of our Brother, unite in one breast, it makes a man doubly miserable; nor is it easy to say,

which

which gives him the greater torment, to feel his Own loss, or see his Neighbour escape it. Nay, an high tincture of envy turns a man into a mere Devil; makes him a Desperado, as inveterate an hater of God as of man, who cares not what he suffers himself, so he may but gratify his malice.—“Because not one
“of all the cattle of the children of *Israel* died, is
“the very reason (ver. 7.) why *Pharaoh's* heart was
“hardened against God and them.”

5. And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To-morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land.

Here the LORD saith, The LORD shall do, &c. which is a plain parallel to that passage in *Gen. xix. 24.* “The LORD rained fire
“from the LORD.”—

The Lord speaking, and the Lord spoken of, clearly implies a distinction between the Person of the SON, and the Person of the FATHER. —A set time is also appointed for the execution of this Plague, as a further argument of the Divine Power, that He was not only the GOD of *Israel*, but the GOD of Nature; that the breath of every creature is in his hand, and the term of their Life dependent on his will.—And if to cattle and brute animals he appoint a set time, well may we say with *Job*, “Is
“there not an appointed time for Man upon earth?
“Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?”
Chap. vii. 1. With the *Psalmist* also, “My time is
“in thine hand^b.”

6. And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of *Israel* died not one.

Hath the Lord spoken, and shall it not come to pass? Hath he set a Time, and shall not his will be accomplished? Howbeit, in this act of divine power, we see that all his ways are

^b *Psalms xxxi. 15.*

Mercy, as well as Truth.—The exact Completion of the prediction proved his Veracity; the appointing a *set time* was an act of Mercy.—The Murrain was threatened on *all* the cattle of *Egypt*, but with this gracious reserve, that it extended only to such as should be *found in the field*^c. And a Day's time was allowed, as a kind warning to their Owners, to house and secure them from the danger^d.

Why would *Pharaoh* send, if he would not be convinced by the truth? To what purpose was he convinced of the fact, if he would not submit to the will of Him, whose words he found as true, as he felt his Power to be great? The

7. *And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.*

proof he had of both, one would imagine, should have humbled his spirit, and overcome his obstinacy. But we find it had the contrary effect, and even *hardened* him the more; and that for the reason before assigned on ver. 4. Yet, how strange soever this may seem in *Pharaoh*, look we but into the conduct of our own Heart, we shall find it hath hardened itself against as strong evidence of truth, and convictions of Conscience, and rather more frequent judgments than were inflicted on that obdurate Prince.—Nothing is more commonly acted, even among Christians, than this part of *Pharaoh*.—But Oh! whatever Plague thou sendest on us for our sins, let it not be the plague of the Heart! Any judgment, good Lord, but an hardened Heart, and a seared Conscience!

All the former plagues proving ineffectual, God proceeds here to inflict greater

8. *And the LORD said unto Moses, and unto Aaron,*

^c Exod. ix. 3.

^d *Manasseh Ben Israel* very well reconciles the seeming Contradiction between what is here said of the general mortality among the cattle of *Egypt*, and the plague of Blains on them, ver. 9. and of Hail, ver. 19.

Take unto you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it towards the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh.

9. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boyl breaking forth with blains, upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt.

and heavier judgments. He now comes home to *Pharaoh* and his people; and, next after their cattle lays his scourge upon Them-selves.—*Philo* tells us, that the *boyls* were so extreme, that the whole body, from head to foot, was covered with sores:—And by God's placing the botch of *Egypt* among the grievous Curses, wherewith he threatens the disobedient *Israelites**, it appears how terrible a Plague this was.—At the same time we cannot but observe, how just a Retaliation on the *Egyptians* it was, to be Thus punished:—They had, with great rigour and cruelty, made God's People to serve in the Fire; with handfuls of ashes from the same Furnaces, he sent them a sore plague to chastise them; that so these oppressors, and all such oppressive Tyrants, might know, that “Wherewithal a man sinneth, by “the same also shall he be punished.”

10. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became a boyl breaking forth with blains, upon man, and upon beast.

11. And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boyl: for the boyl was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

It is very probable, as we have supposed, that these *Ashes* were taken out of those very *Furnaces*, where the poor *Israelites* were kept to their labour and drudgery; which being cast up into the air, produced a general dust or mist over the whole country, of so poisonous a quality, that it festered the flesh of *man* and *beast*, and broke out into pestilential

* Deut. xxviii. 27, 35.

† Wisd. xi. 16.

12. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

Ulcers so exquisitely painful, as to kill (saith *Philo*) great numbers, and to make the lives of all that were smitten therewith, an insupportable burden.—To convince them

also of the supreme and irresistible Power of the God of *Israel*, the very magicians (*Jannes* and *Jambres**) who had hitherto resisted *Moses*, were struck with the same Plague.—Yet all this had no other effect on the mind of the obstinate *Pharaoh*, than to render it still more hardened and desperate, as God had foretold it would be.

13. And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Rise up early.] He that hath God's work to do, must be up betimes.—Ministers and Magistrates, Masters of Families, &c. must be early and diligent, to execute the commands and will of God, in their respective stations. —God loves not sluggish servants: Their Reward

shall be proportioned to their Alacrity and Diligence; their Punishment to their Sloth.—We find, that, in God's esteem, the slothful and unprofitable, the slothful and wicked servant, are equivalent terms, and infer crimes of equal guilt. (See *Matt. xxv. 26.*)

14. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: that thou mayst know that there is none like me in all the earth.

15. For now I will stretch

There is a day of Grace, which may be lapsed; a time of Mercy which will expire: And he that hath sinned himself into a reprobate state, hath already commenced a state of Reprobation. —This was now become the case of *Pharaoh*; and will be

out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

16. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my Name may be declared throughout all the earth.

17. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

devoted to be a Monument of divine Vengeance, a vessel of wrath fitted for Destruction.—Thus God will be glorified in his creatures; as Examples, either of Mercy, or of Judgment.

18. Behold, to-morrow about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt, since the foundation thereof, even until now.

19. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field: for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.

20. He that feared the word of the LORD amongst the servants of Pharaoh,

of all those, who obstinately hold out against all the calls of justice and mercy; and who will not know the things that belong unto their peace, until they be hid from their eyes.—Before we are told, that *Pharaoh* hardened his Own heart; now we read, that *GOD* hardened it; and that he will send all his plagues upon his heart, and that he had raised him up for this very purpose, that in him he might shew his great power, &c.—So that now he is

Notwithstanding the sentence of Destruction and final excision, passed upon *Pharaoh*, God doth not remit of his own essential Goodness and Beneficence; but still, in the midst of Judgment, remembers Mercy; not only respiting his next plague of hail to the ensuing day, but, by a timely notice, admonishing them to provide for the safety of their cattle and servants, as we before observed on the plague of Murrain.—Thus the Lord is gracious both to Man and Beasts, and his mercy is over all his works.

Though,

made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses.

21. And he that regarded not the word of the LORD, left his servants and his cattle in the field.

22. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt; upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

23. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

24. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation.

25. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast: and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

Though, at this time, he send the rain of his hail upon the unjust only, and not upon the just, yet he gives them sufficient warning to escape the effects of his fierce anger; as taking more pleasure

in the Life and Safety, than in the Death and Destruction, of his creatures.

This plague of *thunder*, and *hail*, and *fire mingled with the hail* (two Contraries concurring, but not destroying each other), is a lively and expressive emblem of the spiritual state of all hardened Sinners. They hear the mighty thundrings of Divine Vengeance; they see the fire of his wrath, but their Hearts remain still insensible and cold, still frozen and stony as the *hail*.—One of the Fathers^h draws a good argument from this passage, to convince the Heathens, that the Elements were not under the direction of particular Deities, as they vainly imagined, but of one supreme and only God. And shall not We, the people of this great and glorious Lord God, who commandeth the waters, and maketh the Thunder; fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storm, fulfilling his word;

^h Theodoret.

shall not we, in all our Weather, all our Seasons, and every change, acknowledge him, whose Will and Providence rules and directs these things?—Nature is his servant, the Elements his instruments, to bless, or to punish, man; but still with this constant design of mercy, to Reform or Improve him. So that, in all Temporal Judgments, we may observe these three ingredients, the *thunder* to awaken, the *fire* to melt the sinner; and, if he continue impenitent (keeping the *field*, and standing out in defiance of God), the *Hail*, to break and destroy him.

Hence we learn, not only
 26. *Only in the land of* as St. *Peter* speaks, that “the
Goshen, where the children “ Lord knoweth how to
of Israel were, was there “ deliver the godly out of
no hail. “ temptation, and to reserve
 “ the unjust unto the day

“ of judgment to be punished¹,” but are led to observe another Distinction, which God makes between his people and the world. In *Goshen* doubtless they heard the mighty Thundrings, and saw the dreadful flashes of Lightning; but they had none of the *Hail*: This ingredient of the divine cup, it is particularly noted, they were free from; which may teach us, that there is a benefit in Hearing the voice of God’s Thunder, and Seeing his Lightnings.—The sufferings of others are Blessings to his children, and the kindest preservatives from Sin and Punishment. The *Hail*, and furiousness of his wrath, is a judgment which falls only on *Egyptians*, only on his Enemies.—Whosoever hardens his heart against God, ceases to be his; and from that instant commences an Enemy, and the object of his Vengeance.

At last the mighty Monarch is brought to his penitentials; he confesses, and begs pardon; his proud heart
 27. *And Pharaoh sent* and called for *Moses and Aaron, and said unto them,*

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 9.

I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

28. *Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thundrings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.*

the people go: but his Relapse will shew, how short and unsound all constrained Repentance is; how unsincere the vows and resolutions, which are extorted from us by the mere sense of Pain or Fear.

29. *And Moses said unto him, as soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD: and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayst know, how that the earth is the LORD's.*

30. *But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.*

is forced to stoop to the terrors of so amazing a scene, and to own, that he had seen and heard enough.—

Enough indeed to convince him of his own impiety, and the Justice and Power of God: And while this fit of Conscience and Conviction lasts, he promises, without any reserve, to let

Why would *Moses go out of the city*, to pray for averting this judgment?—To this some do answer; Because the city was idolatrous; and so, the emblem of the wicked World, which we must renounce before we can have access to God, or any interest in his favour.—It may teach us also, that “the just live by Faith, and not by sense.” Had *Moses* consulted with flesh and blood, the dreadful scene of

Thunder, Fire, and Hail, which destroyed all that were found abroad, was enough to deter him: But, he seeing with the eye of Faith only, looks at the Hand, from whence the storm came; and beholds life and safety in the midst of that death. For who, or what, can harm us, if we be followers of that which is good, and are found in the way of our Duty?—But where the eye of Faith is wanting, it is plain, from this instance of *Pharaoh* and his people, that men may

may be convicted, and yet not convinced: So that *Moses* had reason to say, *As for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.*

This may seem strange to us *Europeans*; but in *Egypt*, where they had but one seed-time for all manner of grain; namely, after the recess of the River *Nile*, which once a year overflowed the whole land; it is no wonder the *barley* and *flax* should be so much forwarder than the *wheat* and *rye*, which are of slower growth¹.—A parallel to this happens in the spiritual field of God's husbandry, the Church; some Souls are hasty and forward in the growth of Grace; the seed springs up early, but lasts not long: Persecution or Temptation nips the tender bud, like frosts, or blighting winds, in a forward Spring: While graces of a slower growth escape the danger, and at length come to an happy maturity.

31. *And the flax, and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled.*

32. *But the wheat and the rye were not smitten; for they were not^k grown up.*

33. *And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.*

The circumstance of *Moses* going out of the city, and spreading abroad his hands unto the Lord, in order to obtain a cessation of this grievous Plague, contains also a mystical, as well as moral sense; and seems, for that reason, to be twice taken notice of.—This action and gesture of *Moses*, as well as the season and subject of our present Meditations, call upon us to turn our eyes on the like action of our blessed Redeemer and Intercessor,

^k Heb. were hidden.
 Ὀψιμα γὰρ ἦν. So also *Castalio*, quod erant tardiora, were of slower growth.

¹ So the Greek translators express it,

whose Mediation and Sufferings we are now commemorating.—What was the dreadful storm of *thunder, rain, and hail*, from Heaven, but the emblem of Divine Wrath poured on the world by the offended justice of God? What was the inevitable Death, which destroyed all that were so hardy as to abide abroad, but the absolute inability of Man to withstand or endure, much less to avert, the tempest of almighty Vengeance?—Who but the holy JESUS durst appear to weather such a storm, and face the danger? He bore it All, and Alone. He *went out of the city*, first to Pray, and then to Suffer: He prayed in the garden of *Gethsemane*, and there conflicted against the whole artillery of Heaven, the *Thunder* of God's Threatnings, the *Fire* of his Anger, the *Hail* of his Power. “There he offered up those “prayers and supplications with strong crying and “tears, unto Him that was able to save from death, “and was heard in that he feared^m.”—He again *went out of the city*, to spread abroad his hands unto the Lord; that is, to suffer (“for he suffered with- “out the gateⁿ”): And by extending them upon the cross (in the same posture his servant *Moses* had typically represented) he offered up himself an oblation and sacrifice for the sins of the world.—And so the *thunder and hail ceased*: God was appeased, his justice satisfied, and *the rain was not poured upon the earth*.

34. *And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.*

35. *And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, nei-*

All was now perfectly calm again; but the effect it had upon *Pharaoh*, was just as *Moses* had foretold (ver. 30.); instead of melting him into compliance and gratitude, the Mercy rather hardened him the more.—No sooner was the sky cleared

^m Heb. v. 7.

ⁿ Heb. xiii. 10.

ther would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses. up, but he forgot the solemn promise he had made, violated his faith and honour, and set God at defiance again.

—Let us beware of this spirit of *Pharaoh*; for it is no new thing, even after the greatest deliverances from Death, Sickness, or other extraordinary Mercies, to see men *sin yet more*, to harden their hearts after the most solemn professions of Repentance, and grow worse and more wicked than ever°. It is indeed neither Punishments nor Mercies, but the divine Grace alone, can make in us penitent and obedient Hearts. Without this our very escapes and deliverances, will prove greater judgments than the affliction we suffered: True Repentance therefore prays not against Sufferings, but against Sin; nor desires, or even wishes, the rod to be removed, till it has conquered the stubbornness of the Heart; and made us hate, as well as smart for, our offences against God.

° This case we have seen in the year 1749. The people of *London* were exceedingly terrified at the two earthquakes, which happened on the 8th of *February*, and the 8th of *March*, in that year; and for a time seemed penitent, and to frequent the Church more than usual; but they soon relapsed into their sinful courses again, and are rather grown more wicked than before.





The Sunday next before EASTER.

Second Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

MATTHEW, Chap. xxvi.

After reading the Chapter.

THIS Lesson sets before us the first scene of our Lord's Sufferings. It contains the history of the Ruler's conspiracy against him; their consultation how they might apprehend him, and put him to death; the base Treachery of Judas, in betraying him to them, &c. Our Church therefore, having dedicated the whole ensuing Week to solemn meditations on his Passion, has appointed this Lesson, which relates those previous steps, as the most proper introduction to this mournful Occasion.

From our Lord's triumphant Entry into *Jerusalem*, which happened on the very Day of the week, which answers to this Sunday, and the people's bearing Branches of Palm-trees in their hands, and strewing them in the way, as he passed along, this day (as we observed before) came to be called **PALM SUNDAY**. But if, with our wise and most excellent Church, we confine our meditations to those incidents which regard only his Sufferings; and for which reason she seems to have chosen this Chapter, rather than the

twenty-

twenty-first, for her Lesson on this occasion; the reflections most naturally arising on weighing the contents of it, seem to be these following.

In the first place, we find God's own People, yea, their Heads and Rulers, taking counsel against the Lord, and against his Anointed.—What is this, but a lively emblem of the general Corruption of Mankind; yea, of an open Rebellion, and declared enmity, against God; seeing his own people were revolted from him, and conspiring against him?—If we take a view of Professors in private life, how often do we see some *Judas* betraying our blessed Master with a kiss, by a counterfeit Shew of piety, and a sanctified Hypocrisy!—How, in *Peter's* denial of his Lord, do we behold the great frailty and weakness even of Good men, in the times of Trial!—Howbeit, in the penitent *Magdalen*, as well as in *Peter's* tears, we have an emblem of some Comfort; intimating to us, that the Human nature was not so totally depraved, so absolutely lost to all moral goodness, as to be past cure:—That there were still some Remains of virtue and piety left amongst Mankind; and that God doth not reject the smallest relents of Grace; that he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; but is ever ready to “give Repentance to his sons and daughters.”

This is the picture which our Lesson gives us of the general state and character of Mankind, when our Lord appeared upon earth.—Let us next contemplate the part which he bears, especially at his entrance on this dolorous transaction, and last act of his sufferings.

While his enemies are plotting his Death, and *Judas* setting his blood to sale, we find our Lord was not ignorant of their devices; nevertheless, we see not the least sign of Terror or Surprise in his whole deportment. He complains not; he reproaches not;

he absconds not; the garden he retired to, was not for Concealment, but for Prayer; it was the usual, the noted Place of his devotions; well known to his Disciples; and therefore the spot, to which the traitor led the soldiers to apprehend him, and whereon he acted his vile treachery.

If it be objected, that his Prayer to his Father to *save him from that hour*, betrayed some kind of Weakness, and a timorous apprehension of his approaching Sufferings; it is confessed, that he acknowledges his *soul was troubled*; and it must be granted that the Prayer which follows that acknowledgment, as it stands worded, or rather mispointed, in our Translation, seems to express Timidity, or too great a sense of Fear. But if that whole passage be understood aright, and Pointed, as I humbly conceive it ought to be, it will set our Lord's Character, in this respect, in a fairer and more advantageous light. For thus it ought to be rendred and pointed; *What shall I say; Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy Name.*—So that in truth, this is not so properly a prayer, as a pious deliberation, whether he *should* pray for Deliverance from the hour of his Sufferings, or not.—His *soul*, he owns, *was troubled*; that is, the Human nature, or rather the Animal part thereof (for so ψυχή often signifies), was moved or disturbed with the thoughts of those Pains it was to undergo: And this is most agreeable to the Human nature, that it should be so; and was one of the innocent Infirmities our Lord assumed. But then, that it was perfectly subject to the dictates of Reason and Religion, appears from what he immediately adds—*But for this cause came I to this hour*; the whole being to this effect; as if he had said, “I feel, indeed, my sensitive and animal
“ part, as Man, stirred within me, and averse to
“ those exquisite Pains I am to undergo in my en-
“ suing Passion. And what shall I say? shall I yield
“ to this call of Nature, as Man; and consult Self-
“ pre-

“ preservation, as human frailty is apt to do, and
 “ sometimes innocently may? Or shall I pray to thee,
 “ O Father, to save me from these grievous Suffer-
 “ ings? No, I will neither decline the sufferings,
 “ be they ever so grievous, nor even petition to be
 “ delivered from them; they are for the Glory of
 “ God, and therefore my own voluntary Choice;
 “ for, *for this very Cause, came I to this hour*: There-
 “ fore, O Father, I ask not to be discharged from
 “ this glorious undertaking, on which depends the
 “ Salvation of Mankind, and the consequent glory
 “ of thy great Name.—Father, glorify thy Name;
 “ so those great Ends, for which I came into the
 “ world, be answered, and thy Name glorified there-
 “ by, I am content to endure the severest Pains.”

Now if this be the true import of those words,
 and of that address of our Lord to his heavenly Fa-
 ther, who sees not a most generous Love to mankind,
 a filial Reverence, and profound submission, to the
 divine will, a steady and unmoveable Resolution to
 prefer these great and noble ends to his own private
 ease, or natural inclinations, how dear soever it
 should cost him? So that, in effect, this passage bears
 much the same sense with that other act of Submission,
*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; ne-
 vertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*^b. We grant
 that here was Fear, but not an Unmanly fear; no-
 thing of Terror or Confusion; nothing unbecoming
 the best or wisest man: Here was a fear, but it
 was a fear to offend; it was a Rational and Religious
 fear; perfectly consistent with that regard we owe to
 Ourselves, and to those higher obligations of love
 and duty, which we owe to God, and our Neigh-
 bour. And therefore, as there is nothing in the whole
 course of the Christian life, more difficult to regulate
 than our Passions, especially that of Fear, which is
 so apt to betray not only the succours of Religion,

^b Verse 39.

but of our own Reason, it became one of the most necessary points, wherein our Saviour was to exhibit to us his own Example for our imitation, that We might also know how to behave in all articles of imminent Danger, and to do likewise.

Again, as to the passion of Sorrow; if it be further objected as a Weakness in our Lord, that he confessed his *soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*; the same kind of Answer may be given; viz. That Sorrow, as well as Fear, is a Natural Passion, interwoven in our original constitution, and not inconsistent with a state of Innocence, where the Cause is just. And therefore, as our Lord thought fit to give this Evidence of his being truly Man, and like unto us in all things, Sin only excepted; so, at the same time, he set us a Pattern how we are to govern our Sorrows, as well as Fears; and withal instructs us, that the wisdom of man doth not consist in extinguishing our natural Passions and Affections, as some heathen Philosophers^c have taught; but in directing them to their proper Objects, and then subjecting them to the rule of right Reason, in all matters of Human concern; and to the Law and Will of God, in all matters spiritual and divine. Where-ever then, in the course of our blessed Saviour's life, we see him exerting any of the Passions, such as Love, Joy, Fear, Sorrow, Anger, Indignation, Zeal, it behoves us to observe with what exact Decorum he governs them; not only Timing their Motions aright, and in the most seasonable Conjunctions; but having an absolute Command over them, and confining them ever to their right Objects, and the justest Measures. Therefore, where it is said, *He was troubled*, the original expresses it more justly [*ἐταράχεν ἑαυτὸν*] *he troubled himself*^d. Christ alone was absolute Master of his Passions; and no man ever did, or ever will, come up to this degree of Perfection. For us there-

^c The Stoics.

^d John xi. 33.

fore to pretend to be perfect in this life, is a vain Presumption. To imitate our Lord's Example herein, we may, and ought, as far as we are able; but to imagine ourselves capable of coming up to it, is to set ourselves on a level with Him, who was God as well as Man, and therefore a most arrogant and profane Conceit.

It would require too much time to dwell particularly on all the instances, wherein our Lord shewed an absolute Mastery over his Passions, and upon every occasion kept them in a perfect conformity to Reason and Duty. But if the pious reader will attend to the several passages in the Gospel, where the animal passions or affections of our Lord are noticed and expressed, it will in general appear, that God's Glory was the sole cause and object of his Joy, and of his Zeal; that Sin alone provoked his Anger and Indignation; that the wilful blindness, and final Impenitence, of the reprobate part of mankind, was the sole object of his Grief, both here, in the garden of Sorrow, and in his lamentation and tears over *Jerusalem*.

The rest of our Lord's conduct in this entrance on his passion demands a serious attention; but, having exceeded our intended brevity, let it suffice barely to mention and recommend that Sweetness and Benevolence of spirit towards our friends and attendants, when in our last stage of life, and taking leave of the world, which our Lord expressed in return to *Mary's* pious respects; not rejecting, but thankfully accepting, their kind offices, as welcome helps and mementos of our approaching dissolution. Above all, let us admire and adore the goodness of our dear Redeemer, for that Legacy of infinite Love, which he hath left us in the holy Eucharist.—His institution of that blessed Sacrament was his Last Will and Testament, by which he has bequeathed to all Believers

the inestimable benefits of the Second Covenant.— This covenant of grace and mercy he had made with *Adam*; renewed with *Noah*, *Abraham*, and the Patriarchs; confirmed by Types, and divers solemn Rites, to *Moses*, and the Children of *Israel*: Now, he Executes the same in Person. At his last Supper he SIGNED it with his hand, his Disciples being the Witnesses present: On the Cross he SEALED it with his Blood: And to all Believers, all that are duly admitted into this holy Covenant, he DELIVERS it as his Own Act and Deed, at his blessed table, as often as we approach it with true faith, and humble penitence. We may therefore very justly conclude, “He hath done all things well;” not only with the most perfect Propriety and Decorum, with respect to his own character; but in the most beneficial and exemplary manner for the instruction and practice of his Church.—With truth also may we say of this our most excellent Church, that she likewise hath done most wisely and well in appointing so proper a Lesson for introducing, and, as it were, Prefacing the solemn transactions of this holy Week, on which all our hopes of Pardon, and eternal Happiness, depend.





The Sunday next before EASTER.

First Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

EXODUS, Chap. x.

The plagues of locusts and darkness: Pharaoh owns his sin, and sues for Mercy, while the judgment is upon him; but relapses again into his former obstinacy, and hardness of heart.

1. *AND the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants: that I might shew these my signs before him:*

2. *And that thou mayst tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy sons son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done amongst them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD.*

S E V E N Plagues had been sent without effect: Pharaoh hardened his heart against all those calls to Repentance. Here God is said to *harden* it, and also the heart of his servants. For which, two reasons are assigned; First, That the Egyptians, that is, all who know not God, may be convinced, and brought to the acknowledgment of the truth, in order to their Conversion: Secondly, That his own people may, by such Examples of God's vengeance, be confirmed and strengthened in their Faith, in order to their perseverance

verance in piety and virtue. It is the Design of all God's Judgments in this world, and the Delight of his Mercy, that all men should be saved; and nothing obstructs this gracious Design, but a proud and stubborn Heart.

3. *And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me.*

4. *Else, if thou refuse to let my people go, behold, to-morrow will I bring the locusts^a into thy coast.*

5. *And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail; and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field.*

6. *And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians, which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth, unto this*

God is long-suffering and patient: He woes us by his Goodness, he alarms us by his Terrors; invites, promises, threatens; tries all means to win our hearts; but Pride shuts up all the avenues of the soul against him; rejects every overture of peace; resists his Power, despises his Goodness, defies his threats.—What remains for a just and holy God to do, but to break and destroy, whom he cannot humble; and make them the Monuments of his Justice, who will not be the Examples and vessels of Mercy?—Tho' he bear long, he will not always strive: If we will not turn, he will whet his sword, and bend his bow.—But, alas! he need only with-hold his Grace, to break and destroy the proudest Sinner. The withdrawing his Spirit, gives us up to a reprobate sense, which, of course, consigns us to Impenitence here, and eternal Punishment hereafter.—He

^a See note at the end.

day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

7. And Pharaohs servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: Knowest thou not yet, that Egypt is destroyed?

knew it; yet would not yield.

8. And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go?

9. And Moses said, We will go with our young, and with our old, with our sons, and with our daughters: with our flocks, and with our herds, will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the LORD.

10. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it, for evil is before you.

11. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD, for that you did desire. And they were

that is left to himself, cannot but be his own destroyer.—When Pride rules in the heart, it necessarily hardens it, because it excludes Grace, and shuts the ear, not only to all admonition both of God and man, but even to the voice of our own Interest.—Knowest thou not yet, that Egypt, is destroyed?—Yes, Pharaoh

When we leave Egypt, that is, when we forsake the World, and professedly engage in the service of God, and true Religion, either in Baptism, or by Repentance and Conversion, we must bring along with us all we have; not only ourselves, our Souls and Bodies, but all that belongs to us, our Families and Dependants, our Goods and Estates, our young and our old; all that appertains to us, or all that we have any influence over.

—The service of God is a Feast, a continual Feast, as well as perfect Freedom. And the sacrifice we must bring, is to be an Holocaust, a Whole burnt-offering, to be entirely offered up to him without reserve, without keeping back any part

*driven out from Pharaohs
presence.*

part of the substance; or the price.—But, alas! there is a *Pharaoh* in us all. The

corrupt heart of man is ever making Terms with God; cannot easily be prevailed upon to give up All; is still for retaining some darling lust:—The *little ones* must stay behind.—And when divine justice insists on the surrendering up these also, in order to perfect and complete the Oblation, we fondly plead for it, as Necessary, Useful, or Comfortable; at least, that it is but small; and are too apt to say with *Lot*, Ah! spare this; *is it not a little one?*

To prevent the plague of Locusts, *Moses* and *Aaron* are again brought in to *Pharaoh*: But because they refuse to comply with the king's partial obedience, and will not allow the *little ones* to stay behind, they are rudely *driven out from his presence*.—Thus it too often fares with the faithful Ministers of Christ. If they will not flatter the Great ones in their favourite Vices, but refuse to indulge them in what they think small sins, such Strictness, although the positive will of Heaven, is counted an unpardonable rigour: They are *driven out*, as too precise or severe; without considering, that it is not in their power to dispense with God's Law, or abate of his Rights.—He will have all the Heart, or none; and accepts of no Obedience, but what is Uniform and Sincere.

Our Lord hath warned

12. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt, for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left.*

13. *And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land*

us, that “From him that hath not” (that is, hath made no good use of what he hath received from God's bounty) “shall be taken away even that which such an one seemeth to have.”—Thus the *Egyptians*, not profiting by the plague of *hail*, nor by the Goodness of God in removing

of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east-wind upon the land all that day, and all that night: and when it was morning, the east-wind brought the locusts.

14. And the locusts went up' over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

15. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

land is darkened with Ignorance, or Contempt of God's Word, and a most shameful Blindness in divine things; but the very human and social Virtues, the plain dictates of Morality, those remains of good works, which even Heathen or Popish Superstition had left us, like the few *green things* and fruits, which the hail had spared, are eaten up and destroyed by this dreadful Swarm, which (as St. John speaks) came out of the smoke of the bottomless pit. So that we may too truly say with the Prophet, speaking of his own times, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like

moving it, and thereby saving to them some of their fruits and greens from the violence of that storm, are justly punished with a more severe Plague, which destroyed every thing that the Hail had left.—And if we apply to ourselves the mystical sense of this plague of Locusts, is not this our own case in our public capacity, both as to our political and ecclesiastical state? — The army of Antichrist is compared, in Scripture, to *Locusts*: And this army, consisting of several kinds, Heretics, Atheists, Deists, Schismatics, Freethinkers, Sceptics, Enthusiasts, are, at this time, by the sore judgment of God, permitted to invade our Church and Nation.—These Locusts not only cover

the whole earth, so that the

“ like the wind, have taken us away ; and if we look
 “ to the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the
 “ light is darkened in the heavens thereof ^b.”—Those
 very Lights, which should guide us to the truth, are
 extinguished, or hidden from us.

16. *Then Pharaoh called
 for Moses and Aaron in
 haste ; and he said, I have
 sinned against the LORD
 your God, and against you.*

17. *Now therefore for-
 give, I pray thee, my sin
 only this once, and entreat
 the LORD your God, that
 he may take away from me
 this death only.*

18. *And he went out
 from Pharaoh, and entreated
 the LORD.*

19. *And the LORD
 turned a mighty strong west-
 wind, which took away the
 locusts, and cast them into
 the Red sea : there remained
 not one locust in all the coasts
 of Egypt.*

20. *But the LORD
 hardened Pharaoh's heart, so
 that he would not let the
 children of Israel go.*

Here we find the mighty
 Pharaoh brought to his pe-
 nitentials again ^c ; confessing
 his *sin* both against God and
 his Prophet, and suing for
 Pardon. Like a child or
 servant under correction, he
 prays to be forgiven *this*
once, and he'd never do so
 any more.—Yet, no sooner
 is the correction over, but
 he returns, like the vicious
 child, or slave, to his old
 habit of perverseness, and
 hardens his heart again.—
 This may seem extremely
 strange, after so many strokes
 of divine Vengeance, and
 especially this very fore one
 of the *Locusts*, which the
 King himself emphatically
 calls a *Death*, that he should
 still refuse to let God's people
 go : But, alas ! if we turn
 in our eye upon the state of
 the inner man, we shall there
 find too true a parallel of

this base and obstinate perverseness.—Man is a little
 world, and in each of us there is a land of *Egypt*,
 and a land of *Goshen* ; that is, a state of Nature, and
 a state of Grace ; a law of the Flesh, and a law of
 the Mind. The first is figured to us by *Pharaoh* and

^b *Isaiah* v. 30.

^c See Chap. ix. ver. 27.

his servants; the other by the *children of Israel*, who are kept in bondage. Nature, which, through the power of indwelling sin, has gained the ascendant, and enslaved the Soul, is often called upon to let God's People (that is, our better part, the Soul and Affections) go, and be at liberty to serve the Lord; but corrupt Nature knows not the Lord, neither will it let his People go: Nothing but judgments can move it to comply with the will of God.—Hence, all those Afflictions we meet with in the world; what are they, but so many Messages and Calls from God, to subdue the stubbornness of our Hearts? Hence, every stroke that doth not amend, is usually succeeded by a more grievous plague. And may we not observe, that the *Locust* coming after the Thunder and Hail, is (perhaps) to let us see, that they whom the threatnings of God, and warnings from heaven, do not reform, shall fall into the hands of false teachers^d? The first and chief cause of fundamental Errors in religious opinions, is the neglect of Reformation in life and manners.—Faith, without due Repentance, is no genuine Faith; at least it is blind, becomes an easy prey to the seducement of Heretics, and false Guides; and while the blind lead the blind, what wonder if both fall into the ditch?

21. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.*

22. *And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.*

Darkness, of itself, is no more than a privation of Light, and therefore not palpable, or subject to the sense of Feeling. But this *darkness* is said to be such as might be *felt*.—So thick a mist fell on them, as not only obscured the light of the Sun or Stars, yea, extinguished all artificial light of fire or candle, but the

^d See note at the end.

23. *They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.* extreme humidity and vapour of the Air so affected their hands and face, as to be felt by the Egyptians in a most sensible manner. So total also was this Eclipse

of Light, that neither things nor persons could be distinguished in the least; nor durst any stir from his house for fear of losing himself. So that, as the author of the *book of Wisdom* speaks*, “They were shut up in their houses the prisoners of darkness, and fettered with the bands of a long night.—Where they fell down, there were they streightly kept, shut up in a prison without iron bars.”—And to enhance the grievousness and horror of this plague of Darkness, dreadful visions of Ghosts and Spectres are supposed, by the same author, to have appeared during “that night, which was indeed intolerable, and which came upon them out of the bottom of inevitable hell; they were partly vexed with monstrous apparitions, and partly fainted, their hearts failing them; for a sudden fear, and not looked for, came upon them.”

24. *And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.*

25. *And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices, and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God.*

26. *Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not*

That God requires the Whole of man, when he comes to serve him, is implied in that saying of God, “My son, give me thy Heart^f.”—And if we freely give him our Heart, we shall, with our heart, readily bring and give him all things else that belong unto us.—But still this is not sufficient; we must bring even more than we have, sacrifices and burnt-offerings.

* *Wisd. xvii.*

^f *Prov. xxiii. 26.*

an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.

These *Pharaoh* was to give to the *Israelites*, that they might sacrifice to the LORD their God. So it is Christ our King, who must give our sacrifice and burnt-offering, that we also may sacrifice to our God. This is a gift we must receive from him, before we can make any acceptable offering unto God.—But this sacrifice will not be granted to us by our Lord, nor accepted by his Father, except we first give up all in our own power, ourselves, our souls and bodies, all we have, and all we are, to be a whole burnt-offering unto him, which is our reasonable service.

27. *But the LORD hardened Pharaohs heart, and he would not let them go.*

28. *And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more: for in that day thou seeest my face, thou shalt die.*

29. *And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.*

Though the rage of *Pharaoh* had so often been foiled by the superior power of God, and all parts of his kingdom bore the dreadful marks of divine displeasure; yet here we find him threatening *Moses* with Death, whom before he had besought in the humblest manner, to remove the Locusts. So true is it, that nothing can come up to the Pride and brutish Rage of the heart of man, which many

times hardens itself, the more it is smitten; and instead of becoming more tractable and humble, grows more and more perverse and obstinate, under the corrections of Divine Justice. When this happens, as it always will, if it persist in rejecting the Grace of God, then may the sinner be said to be a vessel fitted for destruction, as *Pharaoh* was.—From which state of judicial Impenitence, Good Lord, deliver us!

Ver. 3, &c. *Locusts*.] “ The Locusts, saith *Pliny*, are great and
 “ winged, flying like fowls in the air, and making a noise with
 “ their wings. Some have been seen in *India* of three feet long,
 “ whose thighs, when dried, have served for saws: They will fly
 “ over huge seas many days together, enduring hunger, till they
 “ come at a country which they may feed upon. But this is al-
 “ ways looked upon as a judgment from God. They cover the
 “ corn with a dreadful cloud. They devour whatever is green;
 “ or burn it up with their touch. They eat even through the
 “ doors of houses.—Where-ever they come, they cause a famine.
 “ In countries where they breed, the inhabitants are obliged to
 “ wage war with them three times in the year: First, Destroying
 “ their eggs: Secondly, Their young: Thirdly, When any that
 “ escaped, are grown up, they are sometimes destroyed by being
 “ blown away with a strong wind, into the sea.” *Lib. II. Ch. 29.*
 —The locust, in the *Hebrew*, is called *Rab*, signifying many, be-
 cause of their Multitude; in *Latin*, *Locusta*, *ab ustione locorum*,
 from burning up, and consuming the places where they come.
 In the *Psalms*, not only *Locusts*, but *Grasshoppers* are said to have
 been brought, which are a sort of Locust without wings.—See an
 account of a like judgment which happened in the *West Indies*,
 Anno 1630. *Gage's Travels*.

Ver. 16, &c. *False teachers*.] How they resemble Locusts, see
 the parallel in Bishop *Babington's* Notes on this Chapter.





The Sunday next before E A S T E R.

Second Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

H E B R E W S, Chap. v. to Verse 11.

1. **F**OR every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins :

2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way ; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity :

3. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

5. So also, Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high priest ; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.

6. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared ;

8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered :

9. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him ;

10. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

After Reading the Lesson.

THE perfect Propriety of this Lesson, and consequently the wisdom of our Church in the Choice and Appointment of it, will very evidently appear, if we consider the Design of this Day, and indeed of the whole Week following, which is, to set before us the history and manner of our Saviour's Passion.—In the Morning Second Lesson, and the Gospel for this Day, we have the account of his agony and sufferings in the garden of Sorrow; his apprehension; his condemnation, and crucifixion: And every day of the ensuing week the four Evangelists repeat, in their turns, the same mournful scene.—But all this would have availed us nothing; nor the sacrifice of his Death and Sufferings been any Atonement for us, had he not been the PRIEST to offer, as well as the SACRIFICE to be offered up for the sins of the world.—It was therefore necessary to instruct and confirm our faith in the *Nature, Certainty, and Efficacy* of his *Sacerdotal Office*, as well as of the Sacrifice which he offered for us. And this is done, and most clearly taught us, in our present Lesson.

First, As to the *nature* of the Office itself, we are here taught these three general truths: First, That it is absolutely Necessary, *in all things pertaining unto God*; that is, in all Divine Ministrations, whereby the intercourse between God and man is to be transacted, and carried on.—Secondly, That all Priests so employed (*i. e.* so acting for men with God, and with God for men) are *taken from among Men*. Now, this is not only the universal usage amongst mankind, but grounded on the Reason and moral Fitness of things; because the Priest, having the same Nature with the people whom he officiates for, will have the more humane and compassionate sense of their Wants and Infirmities, as having Himself faults and infirmities, which Angels and Unbodied Spirits have not; and

and therefore be the readier, through Sympathy, as well as Affection, to intercede for Them, as well as for Himself.—And these two general observations the Apostle represents to us in the three first verses of our Lesson.—But, Thirdly, The *Sacerdotal Office* is of the highest Dignity and Honour; it is altogether Heavenly and Divine. For although Men officiate as Priests *for* men, they have not their Office or Commission *from* Men; but from God alone. God only is the fountain and original of this sacred Power: So that (as we are told, verse 4.) *No man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God.*—The TITLE indeed a bold Intruder may usurp (and too many such intruders there are in these our unhappy times); but the HONOUR he cannot take, because the Power, which alone confers that *honour*, cometh only from Above.—As none can be a lawful Minister in the State, whom the King hath not appointed; so neither, in the Church, can any man be the true Minister of God, but he that is duly Ordained and Authorized of God.—The Usurper, in either case, is not a Minister, but a Rebel, and a Traitor.

The *Second* thing necessary for our instruction is the *Certainty* of the Sacerdotal Office; that is, the Marks, whereby we may certainly know Where, and in Whom, the true, genuine, and authentic Character, of Priesthood is vested; and how to distinguish it from the spurious and false.—Now, in order to inform and direct our judgment herein, the Apostle hath given us a sure Criterion and Mark, whereby we may discern, except we wilfully shut our eyes, Who hath this Authentic call, and Who hath it not; Who are true Prophets and Ministers of God, and who are not; that so we may cleave to the one, and avoid the other.—The Precedent or Pattern set before us by the Apostle, whereby the Mark may be ascertained, is the call and institution of *Aaron* to the Priesthood.

First, he was *Called*.—This was done, when God was pleased to separate the Tribe of *Levi* out of all

the tribes of *Israel*, and to limit the Office of the Priesthood to that family^a. For whereas *Aaron* was then the Head of that Tribe, he became of course the High-Priest; and the rest of the tribe were all in subordinate degrees under Him.—This first Call, and divine Designation, was also confirmed to him and to his Sons by special Appointment^b. And this, doubtless, was a sufficient Warrant to satisfy him, and all reasonable persons, that He had a lawful and competent Authority to exercise the holy Function. —Nevertheless, to render it still the more indisputable, as well as more solemn, God is pleased (Secondly) to cause *Aaron* (who had before been called and appointed) to be Consecrated also in the most public manner, and before the whole Congregation; to be anointed with the most sacred Oil; to be arrayed with the Priestly Vestments; and crowned with the holy Mitre; and thus to appear for seven days at the door of the congregation^c (for so long were the days of the Consecration to last); that so none of the people might pretend ignorance.

But God, foreseeing (as one of the Fathers^d observes) that there would, at all times, both under the Law,

^a See *Numb.* iii. 12, 13. ^b *Exod.* xxviii. ^c *Levit.* viii.

^d One of the Fathers.] *Clemens Romanus*, in his First Epistle to the *Corinthians* (which is supposed to have been written on occasion of some contention amongst them concerning the Election or Admission of their Bishop), after he had mentioned the miracle of *Aaron's Rod*, which had blossomed, as an evident proof of God's election of him to the highest order of the Priesthood, he thus concludes the paragraph;—"Did not *Moses* foresee what would happen? yes verily; but this was done, that there might be no sedition, or disorderly strife, in *Israel*."—And then he applies this to the case and times of the Christian church. "In like manner," saith he, our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ, that contentions would arise on account of the episcopal office [*Ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς*]; and therefore having received a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed such persons as had been pre-designed [*τὰς προειρημένους*, forespoken of, *i. e.* nominated by our Lord; or, as Bishop *Wake's* note is, by a list left of chosen and

Law, and under the Gospel, be unreasonable men, whose Pride and Envy would malign and murmur at those, who should be preferred to the high Honour and Dignity of the Priesthood; especially that they would contend against the Hierarchy and Authority of the Supreme Order; was pleased, by an extraordinary Miracle of the Almond-rod which blossomed^e, to confirm the Call and Consecration of *Aaron*; that so he might, for the future, stop the mouth of all gainfayers, and obviate all pretence of opposition to the sacred Office.

Thus *called* and appointed, thus Consecrated and Ordained, yea, thus confirmed by the evidence of Miracle, and God's own immediate interposition, was *Aaron*.—But to let us see, that this solemn and authentic designation of *Aaron* to the Priesthood was intended, not only for the conviction of the *Israelites*, but also as a certain mark and pattern which concerns the Christian Church; in order to ascertain the character of the Priesthood in the New as well as the Old law, it is here set down by the Apostle as the Figure and Example, to which the Call and Ordination of *Christ* to his office of Priesthood bore conformity; and consequently is to be the Precedent and Standing rule in conferring, and the mark for distinguishing, the Christian Priesthood.

To prove this conformity, the Apostle gives us the very same Marks, as relative to our Lord's priesthood. First, God's Designation; Secondly, a visible Appointment.—As *Aaron* took not this Honour
to

and approved men, who should succeed the apostles after their decease or removal.—To which pre-ordination, probably, refers that saying of St. Paul to *Timothy*, *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by PROPHECY, &c.*]; “and gave directions, “that when they should die, these should succeed to their ministry.” See Bishop *Wake*'s translation of this epistle of St. *Clement*; and more especially Dr. *Hammond*'s exposition of this passage, in his discourse of the power of the keys, p. 413.

^e Numb. xvii.

to himself, until he was *called* thereto, so neither did Christ [*He glorified not himself to be made an High-Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, &c.*]—This was his Designation and Call to that Office.—Then followed the visible Appointment, Ceremony, or Form of public Institution, when at his Baptism in the river *Jordan*, the voice of God the Father declared audibly from Heaven, that HE was the Son of his love, “in whom he was well pleased” (that is, the great High-Priest, predestined and foretold by all the Prophets, that was to offer up the propitiatory Sacrifice and Atonement for the sins of the whole world); and then the HOLY GHOST, in the form of a dove, that is, in a visible manner, descending upon him, certified and assured the Spectators, who were present as Witnesses of our Lord’s Ordination, that He was verily and indeed *called of God*, and consecrated to the Office of Priesthood.—And, that this Priesthood of Christ was not to be a temporary Office, as the Levitical was, but to continue *for ever* (that is, was never to change or cease, as *Aaron’s* did), we are assured by the express words of the divine Designation, *Thou art a priest FOR EVER* ²: Nay, further, to let us see, that it was not to terminate or expire with his bodily presence upon earth, we are informed by the Gospel, that our Lord, before he ascended into heaven, committed the very same Office and Power to his Apostles, but still keeping to the type and similitude of *Aaron’s* Call and Ordination; “As my Father sent ME, saith he, So I send You ^b.”—This was the call to them; specifying, at the same time, the tenour and substance of their Commission; to wit, Baptism, Preaching, Absolution, &c.—Secondly, Next he ratified their Call, by an actual and visible Ordination; for so it is immediately added, “When he had said this (*i. e.* delivered to them their Com-

^f *Matt.* iii. 17.
^a *John* xx. 21.

² Verse 6. of our lesson, and chap. vii. 21.

“mission),

“mission), he breathed on them, and said unto them, “RECEIVE YE THE HOLY GHOST¹.”—By these two acts of our Lord, the Apostles were fully invested with the Power and Order of the Priestly Office; and withal, sufficiently certified within themselves, that they were authentically commissioned to succeed him in the Honour and Functions of the Evangelical Priesthood.—But, thirdly, and lastly, to notify to others, even all the Laity and people of the Church, and indubiously to attest and demonstrate their divine Mission, and, as we may add, to confer on them the Prelacy and Supreme dignity in the Church, he sent down upon them, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost, in a visible manner, even in the form of cloven Tongues, which rested on the heads of each of them; thus confirming all by a Miracle, as had been done in the case of *Aaron*.

Whosoever applies those Marks and Methods of Ordination to the practice of the Catholic Church in general, or, in particular, to the usage of this our national Church of ENGLAND, will, with infinite satisfaction, observe an exact Parallel; and that the office of the Priesthood hath been conferred and conveyed down from the most Primitive times to this, after the very same Manner; that is to say, First, of Designation or Call; then, of visible Appointment.—For, as *St. Paul* and *Barnabas* were, by the special command and designation of the Holy Ghost, first separated, and so called of God, to the work of the Ministry; and afterwards, by the visible and public Imposition of the Apostles hands, together with fasting and prayer, Ordained and Consecrated into the Apostolical Office, so in all Christian Churches throughout the world, before the late unhappy schism began, the sacred Order of the Priesthood was conferred in the like manner; and is still, blessed be God, so conferred and continued hitherto in this our own

¹ *John* xx. 22.

most primitive and excellent Church; which must be a great comfort to all her true and orthodox Members; as will plainly appear to all that, without prejudice, consult her Offices of Ordination and Consecration.—So that the Promise of God by the Prophet, that we shall *see* (*i. e.* assuredly and evidently know) our Teachers^k; and the Promise of Christ to the Clergy of his Church [“Lo, I am with you “always, even unto the End of the world^l”]; hath hitherto most faithfully been made good.—And we trust, the gates of Hell, notwithstanding all its most inveterate efforts, never will prevail against the sacred Order of the Christian Priesthood; nor ever so far prevail against our holy Church, as to remove our Teachers into a corner any more.

The Conclusion on the whole (which is the general instruction our Church aims at in this Lesson) is to teach and assure us of the perfection of Christ's Mediatorial Office:—That it consists not only in the Intercessional part, in offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that is able to save; nor only in virtue of the divine relation he bears to God as a Son; yea, a Son who learned obedience by the things he suffered; but, thirdly, and more especially, through the Merit and EFFICACY of his Sacerdotal Office:—For, being by the special will and appointment of God the Father *called* thereto, and then invested therewith, in as public and authentic a manner, as was *Aaron*, he was by this means *made Perfect*, and became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;—that is to say, was made both a *perfect* Priest, and a *perfect* Sacrifice. He had a full, supreme, and divine Authority to offer, because he was immediately Called and Ordained of God, as was *Aaron*; and therefore a most *perfect* Priest: The sacrifice he offered to God, was Himself; and therefore most perfectly acceptable,

^k *Isaiab xxx. 20.*

^l *Matt. xxviii. 20.*

because

because a beloved Son.—As Intercessor, he obtained to us the Mercy and Favour of God; but, as Priest, he satisfied the Divine Justice:—As Mediator, he procured the Pardon of our Sins; as Priest and Sacrifice, he saves us from them: So that, by this means, “He is able to save to the uttermost all that come “unto God by him.” And, for our comfort, we are assured, this saving virtue and *efficacy* of his Sacerdotal Office is never to determine, or have an end, because he continues a *Priest for ever*; and hath likewise promised to perpetuate to his Church the same blessed Office and Ministry of Reconciliation to the end of the world.

But although the Office, Privilege, and Power, of the Christian Priesthood, are easily known, because they are external and visible; yet the *Efficacy*, which is annexed thereto, and immediately derived from Christ its Head and Author, through the secret influence and operation of the Holy Ghost, is not so generally understood, or attended to, even by those who are members of the Church; by which means the full Efficacy, and unspeakable comfort, of this sacred Office, is either wholly lost to them, or greatly impaired: It seems necessary to dwell somewhat longer on this head, and to enlarge our meditations on the blessed Effects of the Sacerdotal Office.—Consider then, that as Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Church his Body, the Priestly Office may be said to be the Channel whereby the benefits of his Mediation are conveyed to his Church; and the Clergy, as the veins and sinews, whereby the heavenly nourishment and strength are communicated to the whole Body, and distributed from the head to all the parts.—The outward Form, and external Constitution of the Church, and her Orders, are indeed but the vehicle or canal, by which those benefits are conveyed to them, who are disposed and duly prepared for re-

ceiving the same. First, if with *St. Paul*ⁿ, we compare the Church to the Human body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, &c. (that is, as a body duly Organized) we must in reason admit, that the church or body of Christ is not only fitly joined together, but that it hath its proper Organs likewise: And the Clergy may well be said to be those Organs, by which (as we said before) the spiritual nourishment and strength are conveyed to the whole; and then, what the Apostle further adds [*"The effectual working in the measure of every part, which maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love"*] is that Efficacy of the Sacerdotal Office, whereof we are speaking.—The blessed Effects, though not visible to the eye, any more than the operations of the blood and spirits are in the natural body; yet are they no less real, wherever the vessels and organs are rightly disposed.—But, should it be demanded, how those spiritual Effects of the Priestly Administration are applied to the Soul of every true believer, it may give us some idea thereof, if we consider it as a Medicine when properly applied to the Body: For as herbs or drugs have a virtue for curing the distempers of the Body; the latent property, which God only hath given them, when administred by a skilful Physician, and taken with proper Regimen, applying itself to the disease, and working the cure: Such is the operation of a duly authorized Ministry, in healing the diseases of our Souls; the divine Grace which gave it this spiritual energy, accompanying the means of his own appointment.—Hence flows the benefit of the Word preached; hence the mystical washing away of sin in Baptism; hence the conveyance of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation; the feeding and refreshing the soul, in the Eucharist; and the pardon and remission of sin, in the Absolutions of our church.—Again, to

ⁿ *Eph.* iv. 16.

give us some apprehension how such a Power and divine efficacy are so vested in the clergy, as to attend the due execution of their Ministerial functions, observe we how an attractive power is communicated to the Iron by the Loadstone; yea, how the iron that hath been touched therewith, communicates the like magnetic virtue to other Iron:—May we not then conceive how the Power, that was derived from God the Father to his beloved Son, by the illapse of the Holy Ghost upon him at his Baptism, was imparted by him to his Disciples, when he laid his hand upon them, and added those words, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted.” &c. And more especially, when he sent down the Holy Ghost upon them in a visible form on the day of *Pentecost*.—May we not conceive, I say, how the Power, which the Apostles had so received, hath been imparted by the Imposition of their hands to other faithful men, who were to succeed them? How the same power, devolving from these to others, descended in a continued Succession through every age, even to these our present times, the Efficacy thereof retaining still the same force, without any Diminution or Defect? The late Experiments in Electricity may also serve to confirm this illustration. And if these effects in Nature, though so wonderful, and proceeding from causes above the capacity of Philosophy fully to solve, are yet so certain and demonstrable to every observer; why should we think it strange, that the same God, who gave these properties to natural things, but who chiefly regards the good of Souls, should convey his Divine blessings to them by the agency of his Ministers, whom he hath constituted and ordained for that very end and purpose?—And whoever in their meditations at the holy Table, or other sacred Offices of the Church, will ponder upon these things, I cannot but think their own Experience will afford them such a sweetness therein, as will enliven their Faith, their Love, and their Assurance; and

288 *The* SUNDAY *next, &c.* Heb. 5.

and be feelingly convinced of the infinite goodness of God in instituting and perpetuating such an Order of men in his Church, to be authentic Instruments of deriving down all the benefits of Christ's meritorious passion, with no less Certainty and Efficacy to us, than to them, who immediately received these gifts from the hands of Christ himself, or his Apostles.





WEDNESDAY *before* EASTER.

Proper Lessons for { M. P. { 1st Less. *Hosea* Ch. xiii.
 { E. P. { 2d Less. *John* xi. V. 45.
 { { ——— *Hosea* Ch. xiv.

P R E F A C E.

THIS being the Day on which the Jewish Sanhedrin met to consult how they might take our Lord by subtilty, and put him to death; it being likewise the Day on which Satan entred into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him; the Church, in abhorrence of such inveterate Malice, and so detestable a Perfidy, hath generally observed this Fourth day of the Week, or every Wednesday throughout the year, as a standing and perpetual Fast, or day of Penitence and Sorrow^a.—She seems likewise, for the same reason, to have commenced the Lenten Fast from the same Day of the Week, and to stile it Ash Wednesday.

The present Wednesday therefore in the Passion Week, as head and principal of all the rest in the year, is deservedly distinguished by a particular Service; no less than three Proper Lessons being appointed by the Church for this day's service: the better to awaken and engage all our thoughts and affections on the subjects now presented to our Meditation.

^a See *Clement's Constitut.* and the Apostles Canons in Bishop Beveridge, *Lib. i.* Canon 69.

In order hereto, the first thing that demands our attention is to consider, Who it is that suffered; and the high dignity of his Person. For as the Jews would not have nailed him to the cross, had they known who Jesus was, (for so St. Peter bears them witness, "Had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory"^b); so,

To prevent the like ignorance in us, the two First Lessons out of Hosea (to wit, the xiii. and xiv. Chapters) instruct us to know who this Person was, whom the Jews conspired against, and crucified; whom one of his own disciples betrayed, another denied, and all forsook: That he was no other than He who was the LORD their God from the land of Egypt; beside whom there is no Saviour; who knew them in the wilderness, in the land of great drought: That he, who died for our sins, and rose again to our justification, was the same, who here promises by the Prophet, I will ransom them from the grave, I will redeem them from death.

The Second Lesson and the Gospel for the Day relate the Manner how he was betrayed, apprehended, and arraigned.

And the Epistle^c shews the Cause why he suffered; that is, it teaches us the Reason and Necessity of the death of Christ; namely, that he might take away the sins of the world; "because where a testament is (i. e. "a Testamentary Covenant, or a covenant which is to "take place on the death of the Testator), there must also "of Necessity be the Death of the Testator"^d."—And, because "without shedding of Blood, there can be no remission of Sin"^e."

^b Acts iii. 17.

^c Heb. ix.

^d V. 16.

^e V. 22.

WEDNESDAY before E A S T E R.

First Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

H O S E A, Chap. xiii.

Faith in the merits and death of Christ is the only way to Salvation.

I. *When Ephraim spake, trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.*

*E*phraim here, and often in other places, stands for the whole Ten Tribes, or kingdom of *Israel*, which had revolted from the House of *David*; and consequently, in the mystical Sense, represents all Revolters from the true Church, and from *Jesus Christ* the true Head of the Church; and the miserable and forlorn Estate, to which they are reduced by such Revolt, and how changed from what they were before their fall, both with respect to themselves, and to God.—*When Ephraim spake, trembling;*] that is, while he was in a state of Grace, had a true faith in God, an awful apprehension of his holiness and justice, and a conscious sense of his own Sin and extreme Unworthiness, speaking therefore in prayer to his Maker with Fear and Trembling, then indeed he *exalted himself in Israel*; that is to say, he was raised to an eminent degree, not only of Virtue and Piety, but of Honour and public Prosperity.—But when *he offended in Baal*, i. e. when he lapsed into idolatry, and forsook the service of the true God, he lost all that was great and good, laudable and excellent; he lost his Glory, he lost his Happiness, he lost Himself,—*he died*.—The separation of God from the soul is as certain a Death, as the separation of the Soul from the Body; but much more fatal.

2. *And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice, kiss the calves.*

to this pass, they sin with an high hand, and sacrifice to their Lusts (those idols they have set up in their hearts) all their wealth and substance, their wit and ingenuity, their interest, and their passions:—To these idols they dedicate *their silver*, and are not ashamed to prostitute the dignity of their Natures to a senseless image.—Let not ill men object to the debasements of Humility: Nothing can be more abject and mean, more slavish and scandalous, than the vile submissions which such men stoop to, in the drudgery and service of Sin.

3. *Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.*

in Disappointment only, but in remorse, and the bitter pains of a wounded spirit; yea, their best and only happy end is the sorrow and anguish of a deep and severe Repentance.

4. *Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know*

Now (that is, in such a lapsed and degenerate State) the Conscience grows feared and insensible: Sin reigns without remorse or controul, and the unhappy wretch is led captive of the devil at his will to work all manner of wickedness with greediness.—When men are come

And what exposes still more the folly and extravagance of Sin, is the emptiness and vanity of its best enjoyments, and most promising schemes:—Its greatest pleasures and fairest hopes *pass away as the morning cloud, and early dew*; nor end they

Man may be false to God, and to himself; and too often violates that solemn Engagement he made in Baptism;

no God but me : for there is
no saviour beside me.

tism ; but God is not such
a wavering and inconstant
Being : Though We break
our Vow with him, He never breaks his word with
us. He keeps steady to his Promise ; and, while our
life or any hope remains, gives not over his gracious
design for our Happiness. We are dearer to Him
than we are to ourselves : His love and concern for us
is greater than our own. He is still *the Lord our God
from the land of Egypt* ; *i. e.* ever since we were bap-
tized, and brought out of the wicked world into his
Church and Family.—And among all our rangings
and roving in quest of other Gods ; that is, in pur-
suit of happiness exclusive of Him ; we shall never
*know any God like him, nor find any Saviour beside
him* ;—none so mighty to save as JESUS ; for “ he
“ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto
“ God by him^f ;” and no less willing than able to
save.

5. *I did know thee in the
wilderness, in the land of
great drought.*

Ah blessed Lord, how
dost thou plead with thy re-
bellious Ephraimites, and all
that revolt from thy holy
Covenant ! How dost thou
here plead a prior title to our Love and Fidelity !—
Thou *knewest us in the wilderness* ; thou didst not de-
spise us in our state of nature, nor abhor the unclean-
ness wherein we were born. Thou didst then pity
our misery, and save us from death.—Even *in the
land of great drought* ; that is, in all times of affliction
and trouble, necessity and want ; thou hast ever been
ready to succour and relieve us : Thou hast often
“ turned the hard rock into a standing water, and
“ the flint-stone into a springing well^g ;”—to supply
and to refresh us !

^f Heb. vii. 25.

^g Ps. cxiv.

6. *According to their pasture, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.*

But alas! what in justice ought to devote us more closely to thy service, is the common, but most unreasonable, cause of our Defection from thee.—If thy

love heap Favours upon us, if it dispense Plenty, and bless our basket and our store; our base ungrateful Heart is tempted by thy very Gifts to forget the Donor.—We abuse them to feed our lusts, to inflame our Passions, and increase our pride; in a word, to reject thy service, and despise thy Law.—Thus thy Bounty becomes dangerous to us; our corruption turns thy very Goodness into a snare. So that thy mercy is compelled to put on the disguise of Terror, that by our very fears thou mayst preserve us from ruin; and to be gracious, thou must be severe.

7. *Therefore I will be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them.*

Hence it is that thou so often appearest, in thy judgments, with the fierceness of a lion, with the insidiousness of the leopard^h; but not with the same Design,—of

Cruelty, to devour; but of Mercy, to save; and by wholesome Severity to awe those into duty, whom Indulgence is apt to spoil.—Thus it is, O blessed Jesus, that thou art both the Lamb of God, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah:—A mild, a meek, as well as innocent, lamb, in thy own nature as thou art of God, and therefore *full of grace and truth*ⁱ; but to thy People thou sometimes art constrained, contrary to thy nature, to put on the Lion, yet still retaining thy Love and Goodness towards us, and the same grace

^h *Insidiousness of the leopard.*] So Pliny in his Natural History tells us of the leopard:—*Cujus proprium est insidare condensis arborum, occultari earum ramis, et in prætereuntia desilire.*

ⁱ *John i. 14.*

and truth under either Appearance.—And thus that wonderful Prophecy comes to pass, “The Lion lies down with the Lamb^k.”—In thee they unite and center together:—In Thee “mercy and truth do ever meet together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other^l.”

8. *I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rent the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.*

How harsh and severe do these words sound in their literal sense; but how sweet and beneficial in the true and mystical meaning! So true is it, that the Letter killeth, but the Spirit, or spiritual sense, of the word of God, maketh alive^m.—When we withdraw our duties and affections from Christ, we bereave him of his young; we rob him. And as he cannot be supposed to have less Love for us, than a bear hath for her whelps, what wonder he should be provoked at so injurious a Robbery?—The thief shall not conceal, much less carry off, his plunder without controul.—The right Owner, whose Title is confirmed both by Nature and Purchase, will meet him (he saith not, follow after or pursue, but) with greater swiftness get before the spoiler, and meet him in his flight to reclaim and recover the Prey.—Happy for us, O Lord, to be so met with in our unjust depredations, that so our vagrant passions, which the world, or the flesh, have carried away, may again be brought home to thee.—If the Heart prove stubborn, and refuse to make Restitution, thou wilt rent its caul; that is, all those Covertures and carnal Dependences, which resist the impressions of thy Love, and withstand thy Power.—If still it remain obdurate, and the rending its Caul, that is, thy chastisements and inflictions, have no effect, then wilt thou proceed

^k *Jf.* lxxv.^l *Pf.* lxxxv.^m *2 Cor.* iii. 6.

to devour us as a lion :—But even in this we may read a Mercy :—Thou destroyest and devourest us by some extraordinary Judgment, that so this outward man perishing, the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.—But if this also prove ineffectual, what can remain but a fearful looking for of thy fiery indignation ?—The wretched Impenitent is consigned over to the full weight of divine Vengeance : *The wild beast of the field shall tear him.*—He shall be delivered up to *Satan* ; to misery and torment everlasting.—Justice will inevitably destroy, whom no designs of Mercy can mollify and convert.

9. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help.*

Happy the soul that understands this Truth ; happier he who Experimentally knows and feels it !—Nothing can destroy man but

Sin ; nothing can save him but Christ. — How pertinently does this follow what we learned in the preceding verse !—The due knowledge of our own Misery, will give us a just sense of the power and malignity of Sin : The knowledge of Sin will shew us the want of a Redeemer : The first will teach us Humility, the other lead us to Faith.—Sin is the only real Evil in the world, and it comes wholly from Ourselves : The grace and mercy of God is the only Remedy, and it comes wholly from Christ.—We have *destroyed ourselves, but in Thee, O holy Jesus, is our Help.*—This is the most important verity in Religion, and the sum and substance of our Faith.

10. *I will be thy king : where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities ? and thy judges, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes ?*

11. *I gave thee a king*

But man is ever acting the part of the *Israelites*, who rejected the authority and protection of God, and must needs have a King like the nations round about them to lead them out to battle, when the LORD himself was their King.

in mine anger, and took him
away in my wrath.

King.—Thus we fondly prefer the schemes of our own Contrivance, worldly and mere human means, before the gracious and wise designs of Providence for our Safety and Happiness.—God indeed often gratifies such Requests; but he doth it in Anger [*I gave thee a king in mine anger*]: Yet not so much in revenge of the indignity offered the divine Majesty, as a kind and proper Reproof to shew the Vanity of our own wisdom, and convince us how incapable we are to help ourselves, and how unable any power whatsoever to save us, but his Own.

Ephraim, according to the letter, signifies the Kingdom of *Israel*, or state of the ten tribes which separated themselves from the house of *David*; but in the Mystical sense (as before observed) does aptly represent to us that part of mankind which is in the state of Nature, or fallen away from God, and

12. *The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid.*
13. *The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him, he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.*

under the power and dominion of Sin.—The *Iniquity* of such is *bound up*; fastened and *bound* upon them by the inflexible decree of divine Justice.—Their *sin is hid*,—not from the eye of God, but their own; they see not their Sin, but boldly commit and continue therein; not considering that they do evil.—And nothing can recover them from so deplorable a State but a perfect Renovation of their Nature. They must be born again (as our Lord himself assertsⁿ) before they can enter into, or even see, the kingdom of Heaven. The throws and pangs of this spiritual Birth (to adult persons) are often like *the sorrows of a travailing woman*, acute, and exceedingly painful; yet quicker and more vigorous than those of Nature; nay, the

ⁿ *John iii.*

sharper the Pain, the quicker will be the Birth.—So that he must be *an unwise son* indeed that *stays long*, and delays the time to bring forth the new man.—Such Metaphors as these are not unusual in holy Writ, and denote the effects of Regeneration, or the New Birth.—Whatever other meaning this obscure passage may have, this seems most suitable to our present purpose.

14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.*

This, in the literal sense, contains a kind promise, that however hopeless and desperate their condition might seem to be, God would in due time deliver his people out of their distress: But the spiritual meaning is of much greater importance to us, as well as more sublime.—To

save from Death, *i. e.* to preserve Life, and save from Dying, is a great mercy; but to ransom from the *Power of the grave*, and redeem from death, *i. e.* to restore the Dead to Life again, is a far more extraordinary Deliverance. To *Redeem*, and thus bring us back from the grave, and rescue out of the very *Hand* ° of Death, is an act of mercy and power peculiar to Christ.—This is here foretold, and the Manner described how it should be brought to pass.—First, That Christ by dying would destroy Death. [—*O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction*] —He destroyed him who had the power of death; that is, the devil ^p; and this Power he destroyed, not by using superior Strength, but by yielding thereto; for so, as it were, by an holy stratagem, he betrayed Satan into a forfeiture of that power of death, which, till then, he had exercised, and seemed to claim a right to, as Executioner of divine Justice. But now by unjustly causing the innocent *Jesus* to be put to death

° So the *Heb.*

^p *Heb. ii. 14.*

as a Criminal and Malefactor (which was more than his Commission extended to), he merited to be deprived of that Dominion over Mankind; it becoming most strictly just, that the Guilty, who fly for refuge to Christ, should be acquitted from Death for his sake, who had unjustly suffered death for theirs.—Secondly, Again, Christ *ransoms* from the Grave by the power of his own Resurrection: For, having raised Himself, and thereby given all his Members an assurance of the like glorious Resurrection to Life, he has made death to be no more than a Sleep to all true Christians. Yea; come death how, or when, it will, we are enabled, through Christ, to despise its Terrors, or to embrace it as a Friend; nay, to welcome it as a passage to Life rather than a Death; as the end of every Sorrow, and an happy entrance on a state of Bliss and Immortality:—Thus hath Christ swallowed up death in Victory, so that every faithful soul may well join in *St. Paul's* exulting song of Triumph, “O death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?”—But thirdly and lastly, This Prophecy will have its full and most perfect completion, when our Bodies shall be raised out of the Grave at the last day, and this mortal put on immortality: Then Death shall be utterly destroyed, and even cease to be. Then shall Death and the Grave be compelled to deliver up the Captives they have taken; all the sons of God shall be ransomed, and enjoy a glorious everlasting Liberty; while Death itself, and Hell, with all those who are not found in the Book of Life, shall be cast into the lake of fire¹.

A very difficult passage to understand; and is variously rendered by Expositors. Some explain it only of the captivity of the Ten Tribes into *Assyria*; others

15. *Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east-wind shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and*

¹ 1 Cor. xv.

² Rev. xx. 14.

his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.

take it, in the mystical sense, as a prediction of the day of Judgment and final retribution. But, if we keep to the spiritual meaning, in

which we have explained the 12th and 13th verses, both the coherence of this verse with the context will be best preserved, and the Doctrine contained therein (being a doctrine of general use) be better enforced.

Ephraim' by his Fruitfulness (as the name imports), but much more so by his separation from the people of God, as we observed before, is an emblem of the state of Nature.—Nature, in all its productions, is generally more fruitful than Grace; but as it is not intitled to the like benefit of the divine Blessing, its happiness and prosperity is but transient, and of short continuance: Therefore it is said, *Though he be fruitful,—an east-wind shall come, &c.*; that is, the power of Grace shall at last prevail, and bring a blast upon all worldly advantages; so that all the *Springs* and *Fountains*, all the *treasures* of Nature, shall be *dried up*, exhausted, and *spoiled*. But, if this effect (which sounds so like a Curse) follow the Conversion of a penitent, it will become a Blessing rather than a Curse.—His own *springs*, and his *fountains*, must be *dried up*, and all his delectable *treasures* spoiled, counted of no value, and renounced, when he professes himself the Candidate of Grace; that is to say, his Words, his Thoughts, his Actions, his Desires, with every enjoyment in life, must be turned into a new Channel; he must become quite another man, must be made a NEW CREATURE, as an Apostle speaks, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost (that *east-wind* of the LORD here mentioned), and by the power of his Grace; and, for the time to come, conduct himself wholly by the acts and operations of the Spiritual Life.—“ If we live “ after the Flesh, we shall die; but if, through the “ Spirit,

“ Spirit, we mortify the deeds of the Flesh, we shall
“ live.”

16. *Samaria shall become
desolate, for she hath rebel-
led against her God: they
shall fall by the sword; their
infants shall be dashed in
pieces, and their women with
child shall be ript up.*

Renovation of life ought
to be the constant effect and
consequence of Conversion.
But if Repentance be not
attended with such a Change
as is above described, even
a change of the whole man,
and a thorough renouncing
of all former Lusts, Habits,

and Customs, the power of Grace, like the power of
the divine Word, “ shall not return void, but will
“ accomplish that which God pleaseth.”—It will at
last dry up, and utterly spoil, all the boasted pomps
and vain *treasures* of Nature; and that too with a de-
struction like that of *Samaria*, which is here foretold,
and, about four years after, was fulfilled.—Our Sa-
viour has made the application, on another like occa-
sion”, which we all ought to lay to heart, “ That
“ except we repent, we shall all likewise perish.”

* Rom. viii.

† Isa. lv. 10, 11.

” Luke xiii.



WEDNESDAY *before* EASTER.

Second Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

JOHN, Chap. xi. Ver. 45.

In the beginning of this chapter we have the History of the death and resurrection of Lazarus. By our Lesson we learn, that this miracle of raising him from the dead, proved the occasion of the Jews greater malice against Christ, and of their final resolution to put him to death.

45. **T**HEN many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

46. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

TO comfort the afflicted, is a work of Mercy acceptable to God, and draws after it a Blessing. Hence it came to pass, that many of the Jews who came on that good office, to comfort Mary, and to condole with her on the death of her Brother, became converts to Christ, and believed on him.—Works of Benevolence and Charity are excellent preparatives to dispose the heart for the reception of a true and genuine Faith. Much more are they sure to find *Christ* (as these Jews found Jesus at Mary's house) who do these works

works for *Jesus* sake.—But where Custom only, or Curiosity, lead men on, without the considerations of Religion, the enemy is ever at hand, to pervert this office of Love to the service of sin; and to defame or misrepresent the most charitable Designs.—It is an hellish employment to be an Accuser of good men; and yet there are too many in the world, like some of the *Jews* in our text, who, out of ill-will to Religion, turn Informers against the most holy Actions, as others do against Villainies, and the most notorious Crimes.

47. *Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doth many miracles.*

Who would not rather have imagined, that the Governors of the *Jewish* Church would immediately, upon hearing of so extraordinary a Miracle, have summoned a Council to acknowledge

JESUS for their *Messiah*? But alas! they assemble together for the very contrary purpose, even to oppose and destroy him.—They own his *Miracles*; yet a whole Senate of venerable Priests and Elders combine together, to put him to death.—What a dreadful instance is this of the extreme blindness, to which Prejudice and Obstinacy, Self-interest, and love of human Glory, will lead men; nay, too often men of Learning, and Heads of a Church!

48. *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*

Senseless reasoning, and yet too common! As if Christianity were inconsistent with true Policy, or our temporal interests; or an enemy to the public welfare. But this is still the

prevailing maxim of the World, where reasons of State are too often made to take place of the will and commands of God.—But the Event of such profane Policy is generally the same as that which happened to these *Jewish* Patriots; it brings on the very ruin

ruin and destruction, which it vainly sought to prevent.—This also is a case that frequently happens in private life; men plunge themselves into wilful and deliberate Sin, which is the greatest of evils, to prevent some small or imaginary Trouble:—Nay, for mere trifles, or some inconsiderable humour or profit, men expose themselves to the wrath of God, and eternal misery.—They are afraid of losing their temporal good things; they think not of those which are eternal; and so lose both.

49. *And one of them named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all.*

50. *Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*

51. *And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation:*

52. *And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad.*

One of the great Corruptions of the Jewish church, which made it high time for God to lay to his hand (because they had destroyed his Law), was the Innovation they had introduced into the Order of the Priesthood.—The Divine Law, and Rule of Succession, according to Primogeniture, in the family of Aaron, had conferred that supreme Dignity for Life; but now the High-Priesthood was become only temporary, by an Annual Election: This had let in infinite Corruptions and Abuses; Bribery and Party-zeal had commonly more influence in such Election, than the rule of God's Law, or the Right

or Merit of the person.—Nevertheless, we are hereby taught a lesson of no small use, for direction of our judgment in the like case: That, notwithstanding some Irregularity, which may have crept into the outward order of the Church, or some flagrant deviation from the primitive Institutions, God does not immediately cast off his people, nor totally withdraw his

Pre-

Presence.—Here we find *Caiaphas*, tho' an Intruder, though an High-priest but for One year, yet, as he was invested in that sacred Office, and so High-priest for the time being, he hath the gift of Prophecy, as a sanction of his Office. We are not therefore to reject the Pastors of our own Church, whose Life or Doctrine we do not like; nor of any particular Foreign Churches, who vary in outward Forms or Discipline from those which are more Apostolical. —Where the root is, that is, where Faith in Christ is held, and an orthodox belief of the Holy Trinity (which is the characteristic of Christianity), there we may and ought to have Unity, as far as is consistent with such a Faith, and our own Constitutions. So our Lord commands his own disciples to hear even the Scribes and Pharisees^a, though in many things erroneous and superstitious; yet, as they sat in *Moses's* Chair, and consequently were the Authorized and Appointed Teachers, they were to be heard. To hear therefore bad Preachers, or Preachers of bad Lives, or who perhaps may have thrust themselves into the Ministry by bad or irregular means (to which we ourselves are not accessary, or privy), can be no hindrance to edification, as some pretend: And that for this plain reason, because God is a lover of Unity, and abhors Schism (which is a breach of Unity, and consequently of Charity) more than he doth the want of Uniformity, or Regularity in the external Circumstances of Religion: Besides, as he hath given his Scriptures in common to all the Members of his Church, there is the less danger in sitting under the Ministry of any, whom some may call an unedifying Preacher. If the Preacher mistake in some point of Doctrine, they have their *Bible*, to secure them from being misled.—If his Life be faulty, and not answerable to the Gospel he preaches, the same Gospel warns his Hearers to “ observe and do

^a *Matt.* xxiii.

“ what he bids them, but not to do after his works ^b. ”

—Even such Preachers may sometimes preach sound and orthodox Doctrine. They may *prophecy* (as *Caiaphas* did) in virtue of their Office, and preach Christ, and the saving effects of his Death and Sufferings, as he did; but apprehend not the Truths they deliver, any more than he, because, like him, they speak not these things of Themselves. Nevertheless, as the Doctrine, if true, is the dictate of the Holy Ghost, and directed to all that hear, it is not to be rejected, or despised, through prejudice to the Preacher, his person, his stile, or manner of delivery, but received as a Message from God.—Howbeit, what hath been said, refers only to the established clergy of any National Church, who have been duly authorized to teach, by the laws of such Church and Nation, especially such a ministry as our own. Those who are not so authorized, we are commanded by the laws both of God and the Church, not to follow nor to hear them.—See what our Lord saith in *John*, chap. x. and our Church in her Canons.—Whatsoever may be urged in favour of the ministerial office in foreign churches, whether Protestant or Popish, we of the Church of *England* are evidently bound, and ought to be governed, by the established laws of our own national establishment.

53. *Then from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put him to death.*

54. *Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.*

There is nothing more wonderful in the whole œconomy of our Redemption, than the exact concurrence of two of the most opposite principles in nature to bring it about; namely, the principle of Divine Goodness, and the principle of diabolical Malice. The will of God, and the Sin of man

^b *Matt. xxiii. 3.*

55. *And the Jews passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem, before the passover, to purify themselves.* through the instigation of Satan, co-operating both, but with quite different and contrary views, to effect the same End.—That so many concurrent Causes should accomplish the death of an innocent Person, is not so strange. But that God should will the Death of Christ, and yet not will Sin, but oppose it, as his holy Nature constantly doth; that Sin in men and devils should conspire also to bring it about, and yet oppose God; yea, that Christ himself should come into the world, on purpose to lay down his life, and yet not be wanting to attend with all possible strictness to the first and more innate principle of Nature, that of Self-preservation; these are wonders more astonishing than any of the *miracles* which he wrought; and shews the admirable Decorum observed by Providence, in conducting this grand affair of our Redemption.—Herein is seen a *Concordia discors*, a *Discordia concors*; an Harmony produced by the wisdom of God, out of the most Discordant Notes.—The *Jewish* council unanimously vote the death of *Christ*; their fears of the *Romans*, or rather, their Malice, and Hatred of the holy *Jesus*, prompted them to this bloody resolution; and the justice of God restrained them not, nor defeated their wicked Design.—They, as free Agents, were left to act according to the natural Liberty of their Will; but their Will being influenced by sinful motives, they became guilty before God of a most enormous crime.—God's Justice, in permitting them to commit this great Sin, is vindicated, first, as this was a

56. *Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?*

57. *Now both the chief-priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.*

world, on purpose to lay down his life, and yet not be wanting to attend with all possible strictness to the first and more innate principle of Nature, that of Self-preservation; these are wonders more astonishing than any of the *miracles* which he wrought; and shews the admirable Decorum observed by Providence, in conducting this grand affair of our Redemption.—Herein is seen a *Concordia discors*, a *Discordia concors*; an Harmony produced by the wisdom of God, out of the most Discordant Notes.—The *Jewish* council unanimously vote the death of *Christ*; their fears of the *Romans*, or rather, their Malice, and Hatred of the holy *Jesus*, prompted them to this bloody resolution; and the justice of God restrained them not, nor defeated their wicked Design.—They, as free Agents, were left to act according to the natural Liberty of their Will; but their Will being influenced by sinful motives, they became guilty before God of a most enormous crime.—God's Justice, in permitting them to commit this great Sin, is vindicated, first, as this was a

just Punishment for the abuse of their Free-will to an evil purpose; but more especially as it made way for his Mercy to draw the greatest Good out of that great evil, and to bring about the destruction of Sin by its own act and deed, and the Salvation of all men by the death of One; thereby verifying what he had said by the mouth of the High-priest, "That it was expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

—Thus, we observe, the doctrine of man's Free-will is the proper solution to this seeming difficulty, which men of Predestinarian principles had raised. And thus God will be justified in his saying, when he is judged by those impious men, who, by their false systems of Divinity, make him the Author and Abettor of sin.—Observe we also, that Christ, by withdrawing himself from the cruel attempt of the *Jews* against his life, hath set us an Example, that it is not only lawful, but prudent and necessary, to consult our own Safety when Persecution arises; and that we are not to expose ourselves to Danger, except the Glory of God, and a greater good, than that of Self-preservation, calls us forth to suffer.



WEDNESDAY *before* EASTER.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

HOSEA, Chap. xiv.

An earnest exhortation to repentance. A form prescribed; and pardon promised upon condition of faith and obedience.

1. **O** *Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.*

BY *Israel* we are here, and in many other places, to understand, not only the Church in general, but every one that is of *Israel*; that is, every Member of the church.—As *Israel* according to the flesh (that is, the ten tribes, whom the prophet here more immediately speaks to) had revolted from God by their Schism and Idolatry; so hath the Christian Church in some measure; and so hath every member of it, in some particulars. This invitation, therefore, to repentance; as, in the first place, it shews the great Mercy of God, and his readiness to forgive; so it points out to us, in few words, the Nature and Method of true Repentance, and what every Sinner is to do, that he may be saved. First, He must *return* from Sin unto God.—Mere Sorrow for sin (which no sinner but feels sometimes, when Conscience accuses, and Guilt flies in his face, and

terrifies his mind) is not that Repentance, which will be accepted of, except it proceed to a Conversion, to a *returning*, from the Love, as well as Acts and Habits, of all kinds of sin, *to the Lord our God*. For Sin is a falling away from God, as it is here said, *Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity*. This was the immediate effect of *Adam's* sin; this is still the effect of every Wilful sin; it separates from God, by cutting in sunder the Bond or Covenant, which is between God and man: And except we *Return*, and lay hold again of this Covenant, we cannot be saved. — That Repentance therefore, which brings us back to God by a sincere Conversion, and unites us to him again, is the first step to be made towards the Pardon of sin, and Reconciliation with God. For this reason, REPENT is made the first word of the Gospel, and is the very first thing we promise in our Baptismal Vow: For all we have gone astray like sheep that are lost: But Christ, the good Shepherd, came to seek that which was lost, and to bring us back to the Fold again.

2. *Take with you words, and turn to the LORD; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.*

The next step in true Repentance is Confession: *Take with you words*: These words must be our Own; they must be the result of a strict and impartial Examination of our whole Life, of every Action, every Habit; yea, of our outward State and Circumstance in the world, as well as of our inward Dispositions and Temper of Mind; yea, of our Abilities, and natural Endowments. — Then, upon a fair, and full view of the whole, *to take with us words*, acknowledging all our transgressions, with every particular Circumstance and Degree that we can recollect; and immediately turning to the Lord by Prayer, *to say unto him, Take away all iniquity*; that is, by a preconceived Form of Confession and Prayer, to implore for Mercy and Forgiveness of our sins. We must confess All, that he
may

may take *All away*. Confession lays (as it were) before God the List of our Debts; but we must not expect any more will be discharged, than what we acknowledge and confess. If through partiality or neglect we omit any out of our catalogue, the Discharge of such will be omitted in our Act of Grace. —In Confession, therefore, we must be just to God, in concealing none; and so shall we be just to Ourselves. All will be certainly forgiven, if all be sincerely confessed. —Hence also we may learn, that although it be in us to commit sin, it is not in us to take it away. God only can forgive Sin; and the best kind of Pardon, is to *take away* the Sin itself. Without this, the Pardon of sins past will avail but little. —For while the sin itself remains, and reigns in our mortal bodies, we shall necessarily relapse into the same sinful actions, and *fall again by our Iniquity*. —In this *taking away* of sin, as well as expiating the Guilt, consisted the perfection and divine efficacy of our Redemption in Christ; who therefore assumed the Name of *Jesus* our SAVIOUR, because he saves us from our Sins. To destroy sin, and *take it away*, was the main end of his coming into the world. And it is only in consequence of this, that God will *receive us graciously*; that is, the Punishment will be remitted, and We saved. —*So will we render the calves of our lips.*] On these words we may remark, that Repentance and Confession will not be perfect, without resolutions and promises of Amendment; and then carrying those resolutions into actual execution. —The vows which we make with our lips, and speak with our mouth, when we are in trouble, and under the convictions of Conscience, are the *calves* here spoken of: And they are to be *rendred*, or made good, to prove the sincerity of our Hearts. —St. Paul, in citing this passage^a, renders it, the *Fruit* of our lips, which, though another word, expresses the same sense;

^a Heb. xiii. 15.

an holy life, and daily performing our vows, being the most acceptable Sacrifice to God; and Praise and Thanksgiving the best *Fruit* of Obedience.

3. *Asbur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say, any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.*

As Conviction turns the heart from sin; and Confession considers the nature and kinds of all our Trespases; then *taking words with it*, is not ashamed to accuse and condemn them; so Conversion, when it turns us towards God, considers all

those Objects, which the world, the flesh, or Satan, propose, as more pleasant, or more excellent, than the ways of Religion; upon a just scrutiny and comparison, the sincere Penitent gives his vote for God, and saith, *Asbur shall not save us*; that is, the World hath indeed been long my ally and confederate; but has often betrayed, and always failed me; I will no longer trust its deceitful promises.—Then follows, *We will not ride upon horses*.—By *Horses* we may understand the chief Conveniencies of the animal life, or (as the Scriptures call it) the *Flesh*. These creatures are indeed natural machines, to assist and help us in what we cannot otherwise do for ourselves; so temporal advantages, such as Wealth, &c. may be Comforts and Aids in temporal Concerns, but are of small help in the Spiritual Life; yea, too often, rather hinder, than forward, us in our way to Heaven. In which sense the *Psalmist* cries out, “An Horse is but “a vain thing to save a man^b.” And again, “Some “put their trust in chariots, and some in horses; but “we will remember the Name of the Lord our “God^c.”

Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our Gods.] As the foregoing words refer to the world, and the flesh, these as plainly have a reference

^b *Psalm xxxiii.*

^c *Ibid. xx.*

to the third Enemy we renounce in our baptismal Covenant, the Devil; being as much as to say, much less will a person who is truly Penitent, and a sincere Convert, fly to Idols for help.—The very Sense and Conviction of sin leads him directly to God, and to God Only; he turns to Him, *whom he hath offended*; and that cannot be an Idol, a senseless Image; no, nor a Saint or Angel; for how hath he offended these? or what right have they to punish, or call him to account?—True Repentance is ever directed by a true Faith; will therefore never be guilty of so gross and absurd a mistake, as to apply to the *work of our own hands* for Pardon; but, as common sense dictates, will apply to G O D to pardon the work of our hands.—And by the way, let us here observe, that, in this place, as every-where else in Scripture, God interprets all Image-worship, or Creature-worship, as terminating on the Image or Creature itself, to which it is offered; consequently is a plain proof against the Use of Images in the church of *Rome*.

For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.]—The Penitent, when he hath renounced the Comforts, the Pleasures, and Enjoyments, of the World; yea, hath forsaken Father and Mother, to follow Christ; may seem in the eyes of men a poor helpless Orphan, destitute of Friends, and deserted of all. But in his *turning* to G O D he finds ALL, yea, more than all that he had lost; he finds in God a Father, that will ever love him; a Friend, that will never leave him; Comforts, that shall never fail him; a Treasure, which neither rust nor moth can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal; Pleasures, yea, Rivers of pleasure, for evermore.—In this world, he finds *Mercy* for every sin, because he repents of every sin he commits; and in the next, his poor, but sincere Endeavours of doing some Good in life, his patient continuance in well-doing, will be sure to find an exceeding weight of Glory, a Crown that fadeth not away, eternal in the Heavens.

This

4. *I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.*

This is God's gracious Answer to every true Penitent.—By *backsliding*, is meant sins committed after having entred into Cove-

nant with God, such as our Church speaks of in her sixteenth Article of Religion: For it plainly implies a Pre-engagement of duty, or promise, between two parties, when one is said to fall back, and break his word with the other.—Now, this text proves, in the first place, the truth of our said Article; “That the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism and grace received.”—For here God is pleased to promise it; nay, not only promises to forgive the sin upon Repentance, but to *heal* the very *backsliding* itself; even that Weakness and Infirmary, which causeth us to fall so often into sin.—And in order to give the Penitent the greater Encouragement, God vouchsafes to add, what is still a far greater Blessing, *I will love them freely*. O the amazing Goodness of God, not only to pardon his poor rebellious subjects; not only to receive them to mercy, but to *love* them, yea, to love them *freely*, even without any Merits or Satisfaction of their own!—But the reason of this his Free Grace follows, and shews for whose sake it is, that we are thus highly favoured of God.—*Mine anger is turned away from Him*. Observe we here, an immediate change of the subject from *Them* to *Him*; which plainly shews a difference in the Persons spoken of.—And who can so properly be meant by *Him*, as our *Mediator*, the man *Christ Jesus*, on whom all our sins were laid, and, consequently, all the Anger of God? But he having satisfied the divine Justice, by his sufferings for sin, God was fully appeased, and reconciled to man, for his sake: And we are therefore Pardoned, yea, therefore Beloved, because all his *Anger* hath been *turned away* from the Son of his Love.—This then is the Reason, the

the only reason, why our *Backslidings* are healed, and our Person accepted and beloved.

5. *I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.*

6. *His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon.*

7. *They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.*

As *Israel*, in the beginning of our Lesson, means the Church of God, and, in particular, every Member of it; here it means rather the Head of the Church (that *Him*, who was spoken of in the preceding verse, even) *Jesus Christ*.—The name of *Israel* is sometimes in the Prophets ascribed to him, and sometimes to the Church, according to the tenour of the words, as they lie in the Context.—But this observable Difference makes

a plain Distinction: All Promises made to Christ, under the Name of *Israel*, do extend to all the faithful and living members of his Church; but the Threatnings of Punishment and Judgments against *Israel*, are pointed only against her corrupt Members, the Sinners in *Sion*. According to this exposition, the Blessings and Benefits here promised are immediately directed to the *Messiah*. Of him then God here saith, *I will be as the dew unto Israel*. As the *dews* from heaven refresh the Earth, and contribute to produce its Fruits, so the Holy Ghost (whose sweet influences are often compared to *dew*) did enrich and adorn the Manhood of Christ, with all kind of celestial Graces and Virtues;—and, from and through Christ, they are derived to us.—*He shall grow as the lily.*] The most distinguishing grace of our Lord was his Humility. This virtue, inseparably joined with his perfect Innocence, made him like the *lily* of the valley, for his lowliness of mind; and white as the Lily, in his immaculate Purity.

And

And cast forth his roots as Lebanon;] as a tree of *Lebanon*, saith the Chaldee Paraphrast. In *Lebanon* grew the fairest of Cedar-trees, and producing the sweetest of gums and spices^d. Christ's *Lebanon* is his Church; here he takes root, here he grows. His Leaves (for he is the true Tree of life) his Fruits, his smell and sweet Odours, fill the whole world with many outward blessings, and temporal advantages; for every good we enjoy is from Him.—But his choicest Blessings, the blessings of Heaven, are entailed on that People only, where he chooses to take *Root*.—Here he *casts forth his roots*, i. e. takes deeper and faster hold; yea, he casts them forth *as Lebanon*; i. e. yields the sweetest frankincense, the sweetest odours of Divine Grace, to rejoice the heart of God and man.—See the xxivth chapter of *Ecclus.* where this growing of Christ in his Church is beautifully described under the character of Wisdom; and may serve as a fair Paraphrase on our Prophet. “In every people
“and nation I got a possession; with all these I sought
“rest; and in whose inheritance shall I abide? So
“the Creator of all things gave me a command-
“ment; and said, Let thy dwelling be in *Jacob*, and
“thine inheritance in *Israel*. So—I took root in an
“honourable people, even in the portion of the Lord's
“inheritance. I was exalted as a cedar in *Libanus*,”
&c.—*His branches shall spread*, saith the Prophet:
“As the turpentine-tree I spread out my branches,”
saith the same Wisdom, in the person of Christ;—
“and my branches are the branches of Honour and
“Grace.”

And his beauty shall be as the olive-tree.] The Beauty of the *olive-tree* consists in its constant verdure; but more especially in the Oil, which its fruit produces. Although an ever-green, and so at all times beautiful to the sight, yet far more lovely is this tree in the excellent properties and effects of its Oil; to wit, the

^d See *Thompson's Travels*.

use of Healing, Nourishing, Exhilarating; yea, of consecrating Kings and Priests unto God; and even of conferring on the Son of God one of his peculiar Names, the *Msseiah**.—It is in virtue of this name alone (as he is the *anointed* King, Priest, and Prophet) that he becomes our *JESUS*, the Saviour.—And what more lovely, more endearing to the soul of man, can there be, than such a scene of Mercy and Redemption, represented to us by this emblem of the *Olive-tree*?

And his smell as Lebanon.] *Lebanon* is thrice repeated in this description, to inculcate to us, that the privilege of Christ's especial Presence is no-where but in the Church; that here only he sends forth the odour and sweet *smell* of his spiritual and divine Graces.—Here (saith he, speaking of himself in the words of the son of *Sirach*) “I give a sweet smell like cinnamon and aspalathus; I yield a pleasant odour, like the best myrrh, as galbanum and onyx, and sweet storax; and as the fume of frankincense in the tabernacle.”

They that dwell under his shadow, &c.] As what went before, is immediately spoken of the true *Israel*, or Son of God; what is here added, is applicable to those of *Israel*, those Members of Christ's mystical body the Church, who should believe in his name; who not only put themselves under the *shadow* and protection of this Tree of life, but *dwell* and abide there by a constant Unity, and faithful perseverance, to the end.—Of these it is said, *They shall Return*; to intimate to us, that even those had gone astray; yea, that all had gone out of the way like sheep that were lost: But withal, observe we, that this is a promise peculiarly made to the Members of his Church; that if They wander from the Fold, they shall *Return* to the Fold again. And this case we have often seen in those persons, who, having been duly initiated and in-

* Which in *English* signifies the *Anointed*.

structed in the Church, have afterwards fallen away into a vicious course of life, or some erroneous opinions, or both; yet, upon some awakening Call of Providenc, have, with the prodigal son, *returned* to their Father's house, and become very eminent examples of that sincere Repentance which our Lesson describes and recommends.—But how should any (tho' nominal members of the Church) *return* to their Father, who have not been duly instructed to Know him? Or how can they, who are out of the Church, be said to *return* to a House and Family, which they never were Members of?

They shall revive as the corn.] This intimates to us, that state of Renovation, which our Church calls a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness. —We had long lain buried, as it were, under the impurities and filth of Sin, as *corn* lies, for a time, under clods of earth and dung; but through Christ we *revived*, and came to life again, as the *corn* springs out of its furrows by the genial influence of the Sun.

And grow as the vine.] To this Tree our Lord compares both himself and his Members or Disciples (*John xv.*); Himself as the *vine*, his Members as the Branches; they in him, and he in them, mutually growing, and partaking of the same Root, the same Sap, the same Spirit.—Such Branches, while abiding in the *Vine*, *shall grow as doth the vine*, and bring forth fruit;—not by any virtue of their own, but solely by a principle of life derived from him.

The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon;] that is, as fragrant, and richly flavoured, as the choicest Wines, such as were made near *Lebanon*, where a City stood that took its name^f from the excellency of the Wine, and richness of the grapes, which grew there.—By the *Scent* thereof, may we not understand the honourable Report, Veneration, and Esteem, which should flow from the holy Actions,

^f Called *Ampeloeffa*. See *Pliny, Lib. v. chap. 18.*

and exemplary Lives, of Christ's true members, like the grateful flavour, and odoriferous *scent*, of the most delicious Wine?

8. *Ephraim* shall say,
What have I to do any more
with idols? I have heard
him, and observed him:
I am like a green fir-tree;
from me is thy fruit found.

That the "Word of God
" is quick and powerful,
" and sharper than any two-
" edged sword," appears,
methinks, in no book of the
Bible more evident, than in
this of the Prophet *Hosea*.

So quick and sudden are the transitions, throughout almost every verse of this sacred Book, from Threatnings to Promises, from Judgments to Mercy; and, on the contrary, from Promises to Threats, from Mercies to Judgments again; that our hopes and fears are kept almost in continual agitation and suspense; and the two-edged sword, like the Cherubims flaming sword, that guarded the entrance of Paradise, is so turned every way, that we know not well how to approach the tree of life; that is, to apprehend the meaning and connexion of this deep and mysterious Prophet.—But, taking the clue of Interpretation from our own most excellent Church, who, in the choice of this Lesson, was, doubtless, aided by the Holy Spirit of God, let us here consider *Ephraim* as the emblem of a Penitent Soul, who, after all its wanderings through every stage of Sin, all its tergiversations and revoltings, its rebellions and repentings, its revolting and rebelling again, is at last convinced by sad Experience, and continued Disappointments, of the emptiness and folly, vexation and danger of Sin; so as at last to cry out, *What have I to do any more with idols?* or, in the apostle's words, "What fruit have I had in those things, whereof I am now ashamed?" "for the end of those things (I now see) is death."—God pursues the sinner, and hunts him, as it were, from place to place, giving him no rest till he bring

² *Rom. vi. 21.*

him, as here *Ephraim* is brought, to a salutary Conviction of his guilt, and of the vanity of Sin.

If we resolve this verse into its several parts, we shall observe it consists of these Four. First, It begins with a soliloquy of the Penitent; having reflected, with just regret and indignation, on the wretched and base returns of Sin, he cries out with no small passion and self-reproach, *What have I to do any more?* &c.—Now this Remorse and Self-conviction is the very point the eye of divine Providence hath always in view, to constrain and drive the sinner to. It is the first symptom of true Repentance, and the very crisis of the soul's Conversion towards God.—God therefore, in the next sentence (which is the second member of the verse), saith, *I have heard and observed him.*—This we are to suppose is spoken of God, as it were, aside, unheard as yet, and unseen, by the Penitent; but heard and seen by the prophet, or spiritual guide, through the Spirit. And we may be well assured, that no speech or words are more pleasing to God, than such a frank ingenuous Confession.—The Penitent, being now at length brought to a sense of the horrible Guilt and Turpitude of his Sin (which he rightly calls Idolatry, being no other than the vain pomps and vanities of the world, or the works of the devil, which in Baptism we renounced), he proceeds, in the third branch of the verse; and adds,—*I am like a green fir-tree*:—Alive indeed, for I feel the pain and anguish of sin, but that is all; I see no Good in me; though I am *green*, I am fruitless and unprofitable; have no virtue, no grace, no Works, to shew.—It is true, O mourning soul, thou art poor and naked, and miserable; but this Complaint of thine is the language of that Poverty of spirit, that true Humility, which Christ has pronounced Blessed^h; and placed in the front of his beatitudes:—Yea, the answer which here immediately follows, and which constitutes the fourth member of

^h *Matthew v.*

the verse, is an Answer of unspeakable Comfort and Encouragement; *From me is thy fruit found.* Of thyself thou hast no fruit; “without Me ye can do nothing¹,” can bear no fruit. But if engrafted into Me, by the holy Covenant, through Faith, or renew your broken Vows, by Repentance, ye can do all things, and bear that fruit, which ye have not by Nature.—I am the Olive; I am the Vine; I am the Tree that bears all manner of good fruit^k. Though ye be *Firs*;—barren and unfruitful of yourselves; be united to Me, *in me shall thy fruit be found.*—Therefore we may well conclude with the Prophet, and with this our Lesson: *Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.*

¹ Χωρίς ἐμοῦ, *John xv. 1.*^k *Rev. xxii. 2.*



THURSDAY *before* EASTER.

Proper Lessons for { M. P. { 1st Less. *Dan.* Ch. ix.
 { E. P. { 2d Less. *John* Ch. xiii.
 Jerem. Ch. xxxi.

P R E F A C E.

IN order to keep our meditations closely fixed on all that our blessed Saviour did, and suffered, during this holy week of his Passion, the Church hath, in the portions of Scripture appropriated to the service of this day, set all her children a task, sufficient to employ every hour of our time, and exercise every faculty of our souls.

To confirm us more and more, that nothing happened to our blessed Lord, but what had been plainly foretold in the Scriptures of the Old Testament (it being of the highest concern to us, to be fully persuaded, that our Jesus, who suffered, as is related in the Gospels, was the very Christ; the very same Person, whom God before had shewed by the mouth of his Prophets, should suffer; yea, should so suffer, as is there related); to convince us, I say, of this, the First Lesson for this Morning, not only declares to us his Name and Character [Messiah the Prince], but the precise Time, when he was to come and suffer. For so, ver. 26. After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And how exactly this Prophecy was fulfilled in our Saviour Jesus Christ, see Dr. Prideaux's *Connexion*, Vol. I. Book 5.

The First Lesson for the Evening service, is that glorious Promise of Christ, and his everlasting love to the church, in the xxxist Chapter of Jeremiah.—A Chapter so full of Comfort, so abounding with declarations of Grace and Mercy, that we may well presume, it was chosen on purpose to support our drooping spirits at this time; lest the continued contemplation on the Dolours and Sufferings of our dear Redeemer, and the rigours of Mortification for those sins, which occasioned them, should swallow us up with over-much sorrow.

This tender and compassionate care bath our holy Mother shewn, by calling off our eyes and thoughts awhile, from the dark and gloomy part of the mournful representation of this week's transactions, and fixing them on the brighter and more glorious prospect of the Benefits and Mercies, which are the happy fruits and consequences of those meritorious Sufferings.—And whose heart can be so dead or cold, as not to burn within him, and leap for joy, when he hears the LORD say, in that comfortable Lesson, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel?

Who that hath felt the least compunction of conscience, the least sorrow for sin, or any concern for offending so good, so gracious a God, but must melt into tears of love and gratitude, at those most welcome and endearing expressions of paternal love and tenderness,—I have surely heard Ephraim? &c. ver. 18, 19, 20.

And who is there but must admire and adore the same divine Philanthropy and Tenderness in our blessed Redeemer, when he reads or hears those kind and affectionate expressions wherewith he took leave of his sorrowful Disciples?—" Let not your hearts be troubled.—I go to prepare a place for you.—I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.—In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."—And again, " I will pray the Father, and he will give you

“ another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.—I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you, &c.”

Time and room would fail me, should I dwell on all the gracious words which fell from our heavenly Master, in his farewell discourses to his Disciples.—That little Flock being now purged of all impure and profane mixture, by the absence of the traitor Judas; how freely did our Saviour pour forth all the refreshing streams of heavenly Comforts, in sweet Promises, affectionate Exhortations to mutual Love and Charity, gracious Assurances, and well-grounded Encouragements, fervent Prayers to his heavenly Father for them, and a most invaluable Legacy of Peace here, and Heaven hereafter! See the xiv. xv. xvi. and xviiith Chapters of St. John, which are entirely taken up in recording the last discourses of our dying Lord to his faithful Friends. And what he said to them, or for them, in Prayer, he still saith to us, and for us, and all the sincere members of his Church, to the end of the world.

Who those faithful ones are, and whether we also be of that happy number, may best be known by taking the estimate, and drawing a parallel from the example of the innocence, affection, and fidelity, which was found in this blessed company, after Judas had left it.—By comparing also our own practice with the Example and Words of the holy Daniel, which our Church, this morning, hath set before us; that is to say, if we have imitated him (this Lenten season especially) and set our face unto the Lord God, as he did, to seek by Prayer and Supplications, with FASTING and Sackcloth and Ashes (i. e. have faithfully discharged the duties of this penitential Season); and have prayed unto the Lord our God, and made our Confession before him, as the beloved Daniel did; then may we be assured, that as the Angel appeared to him to give him skill and understanding; so the blessed Comforter, who our Lord promised should come, will come to us, to give us comfort: And we shall sweetly find that Beati-
tude

tude verified in our hearts, "Blessed are they that have
"mourned; for they shall be comforted."

THURSDAY before E A S T E R.

First Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

DANIEL, Chap. ix.

*Daniel's Fast and Confession. God's Answer by
an Angel. Prediction of the death of the
Messiah; and the precise Time when he should
come.*

1. *I*N the first year of Da-
rius the son of Aba-
suerus, of the seed of the
Medes, which was made
king over the realm of the
Chaldeans;

2. *In the first year of his
reign, I Daniel understood
by books the number of the
years, whereof the Word
of the LORD came to
Jeremiah the prophet, that
he would accomplish seventy
years, in the desolations of
Jerusalem.*

3. *And I set my face
unto the Lord God, to seek
by prayer, and supplications,
with fasting, and sackcloth,
and ashes.*

*We find also, that although a Prophet himself (nay, as
St. Jerom saith, one of the greatest Prophets), he
disdains not to own, that he received his knowledge*

*D*ANIEL had been long
engaged in many great
Employments, and was, at
this time, prime Minister to
King Darius, having under
his care the affairs of a vast
Empire to manage. But
all these honours did not lift
up his mind into vanity,
nor abate his love to God
and his Country. So neither
did the weight and incum-
brance of those secular affairs
so take up his thoughts, or
his time, as not to leave
room for the exercises of
Religion and Piety.—We
see he found leisure, not
only for Fasting and Prayer,
but for reading and study-
ing the holy Scriptures: We
con-

concerning the restoration of *Jerusalem*, from the writings of the Prophet *Jeremy*.—Let no one then, in the most public employ, much less in inferior stations, plead Business, or want of Time, in excuse for the neglect of God's Worship and Service. Let no one, though ever so learned or holy, think the reading of the Scriptures, and other good Books, superfluous and unnecessary, when so great a man, so eminent a Saint and Prophet, as *Daniel*, made them his study.

4. *And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said,* Having applied himself to the reading of the Prophets, particularly the Prophecies of *Jeremiab*; and computing that the Seventy years, determined for their Captivity, were now near expired; he sets himself with more zeal than ever, to implore the favour of God, by earnest *Prayer*, by humble *Confession*, and all the means which were most capable of exciting in himself, and expressing to God, such a sincere penitential sorrow, as might incline the divine goodness to pardon and restore his people.

DANIEL'S PRAYER.

O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant, and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments: (5.) We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments. (6.) Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. (7.) O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day: to the men of *Judah*, and to the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and unto all Israel that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. (8.) O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of

of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. (9.) To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him. (10.) Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws which he set before us by his servants the prophets. (11.) Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice: therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. (12.) And he hath confirmed his words which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem. (13.) As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. (14.) Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doth; for we obeyed not his voice. (15.) And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt, with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown as at this day: we have sinned, we have done wickedly. (16.) O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. (17.) Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lords sake. (18.) O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy Name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. (19) O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city, and thy people are called by thy Name.

Note, The subject and sense of this prayer is so plain and intelligible, so suitable also to the present state of our own afflicted Church, which, for many

reasons, may truly enough be said to be in a state of captivity; that the best use we can make of it, and the best way to understand it, is to enter into the sentiments of the pious *Daniel*, and to offer it up to God with the same contrition of heart, the same Humility and Devotion of spirit, which he expresses throughout the whole.

We are not to think (as St. *Jerom* notes) from the earnest address of the Prophet in behalf of his people, and his urging God with so much vehemence, not to *defer* his Promise; that he had entertained the least doubt of the accomplishment of the Prophecy! But rather think thus:—Seeing God himself is generally pleased to work by certain Means, in his dispensations towards us, how punctual ought we to be in the use of those means of Grace, which he hath appointed to us!—He had decreed the return of the Captivity, after the expiration of the seventy years; but he decreed, at the same time, the proper Means, which were to be used for bringing about that Mercy. One of which, and we may say, the Chief, was a general and sincere Confession of the sins of the people, fervent Prayer, and deep Humiliation, expressed with all the outward, as well as inward marks of Penitential Sorrow, namely, *Fasting*, *Sackcloth*, and *Ashes*.—These, we may say, were indeed the Chief Means, which brought again the captivity of *Sion*. *Daniel's* Prayers did more than *Cyrus's* Power: They moved the heart of God, to be reconciled to his people; and *Cyrus*, in consequence thereof, was moved of God to shew them mercy.—A comfortable instance this, of the great efficacy of *FASTING* and *PRAYER* to all who have duly observed this Penitential Season; and likewise an encouragement to excite others, for the time to come, to use with greater strictness those sacred Means, which God and his Church have appointed, and which all good men, on the like occasions, have observed, for appeasing the
wrath

wrath of heaven, and obtaining Pardon and Peace.— This benefit of Fasting and Prayer seems to be one special reason, why the Church hath chosen this Lesson for To-day's service; this being, in former times, the stated day for receiving Penitents to the peace of the Church.

Note further, in ver. 17. God is invoked to hear, *&c. for the Lord's sake.* What is this but a Form, exactly corresponding with our Christian Form of supplication, in the general conclusion of our Prayers, *Through, or for the sake of JESUS CHRIST our LORD?* And (as it appears by the marginal reference) we are directed so to understand it; the parallel place referred to, being *John xvi. 24.* where Christ himself bids us to "Ask in his name, and promises success to such a prayer."—The apparent distinction of Persons, in this passage of our Lesson, confirms the remark; for so it runs, *O my God, hear for the LORD's sake.* And we may well add, upon this solemn obtestation, turned the whole Virtue and Efficacy of the prophet's prayer; all our requests to God being granted only *for the sake and merits of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.*

Admirable Effect (saith St. Jerom) of this holy man's prayer, who had the happiness, in a most sensible manner, to experience the truth of that Promise of God to his faithful servants! "It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and whiles they are yet speaking, I will hear^a."—

And the same heavenly messenger is sent to him, as had been sent before, and was afterwards sent to the blessed

^a *Isaiah lxxv. 24.*

time of the evening oblation.

Virgin, namely, the Angel *Gabriel*.—The subject of both expresses, here to *Daniel*, and afterwards to *Mary*, was, in effect, the same, even the glad tidings of Salvation; a Redemption from Temporal Slavery to the *Jews*, Redemption from Spiritual Slavery to all Mankind; each of them very great Blessings, the first the type of the latter; the latter the Cause and Foundation of the former; all Temporal mercies, as well as Spiritual, being conferred only for the sake of *Christ Jesus* our Lord.—Note we also, that God hears no prayer more willingly, than that which is made for his CHURCH; none more readily, than that which is joined with FASTING. The Angel put on his Wings, and was *caused*, by the special order of God, to *fly swiftly* to carry an immediate answer to a prayer that had ascended on the wings of Humility and Charity, Fasting, and Intercession,

22. *And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.*

23. *At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment^b came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.*

To give thee skill and understanding, or, more literally, according to the original, *To make thee skilful of understanding*.—We may here observe, the Difference we are to make between the manner of giving understanding which the creature uses, and the method used of God.—Men and Angels can give us skill to understand, by outward means only, by the word of God, by information, and addressing to the Reason and discursive Faculties of the soul.—So the Angel here, He *informed me*, and *talked with me*:—*The commandment* [or word] *came forth*: And, *I am come to shew thee*: Therefore under-

^b *Heb.* the word.

stand the matter, and consider the vision.—But God, by the immediate illumination of his Holy Spirit, opens the eyes of the Mind, to see and discern the truth; and unlocks the doors of the heart, to receive and embrace it.—The first (which is performed by the agency of Creatures) is the way of Nature, and speaks to our Reason; the latter is a supernatural grace, wholly spiritual and divine; not in the power of even the brightest angel, but the sole Gift and Prerogative of God. But of our Lord *Jesus Christ* (in *Luke xxiv. 45.*) it is said, “He opened the understanding of his disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures;” and thereby proved himself to be a Divine Person, and not a mere Creature. It is true he first explained to them what had been written in the Law and the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning himself; but then it is added, *He opened their understanding, that they might understand, &c.* that is, he enlightened their minds, to apprehend what he taught them. The first he did as Man, as a Prophet; the other, as he was G O D.

24. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.*

25. *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment, to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah*

The *seventy weeks*, here said to be *determined*, are not to be understood of Days, but Years.—Among the *Jews*, as there were sabbatical Days, whereby their days were divided into Weeks of Days, so had they sabbatical Years, whereby their years were divided into Hebdomads, or Weeks of years, according to that way of reckoning which we find mentioned in *Leviticus xxv. 8.* This account in the Prophecy is so to be computed; and then it contains,

the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26. *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

27. *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease; and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.*

thereto; and the whole number of years, pointed out thereby, precisely answer to a month. For as the going out of the commandment to *Ezra*, from whence they began, was in the month of *Nisan*^c, or *April*, so the Crucifixion of Christ was also in the same Month, just 490 years after.

After what is predicted of these three periods of time, follows a third branch, or part of prophecy,

^c *Nisan*.] This month is also called *Abib*, and contained part of our *March*, and part of *April*.

tains, in the whole, the term of 490 Years. But this Term is distributed into Three periods: The first is of *seven weeks*, or forty-nine years, containing the time from the going forth of the commandment to *Ezra*, to restore and build *Jerusalem*, to the time of completing and finishing that work by *Nehemiah*.—The Second, from the end of that period, to the Coming of the *Messiah*, is Sixty-two weeks, or 434 Years: And the third and last period, from that of his coming, to his cutting off by his death on the Cross, which was one week, or seven years after. All these, put together, make up the *seventy weeks*, or 490 Years of this Prophecy. And, according to this Computation, every particular of it hath been fully verified in a completion exactly agreeable

which

which is contained in the latter part of the 26th, and the latter end of the 27th verses; and foretels events to be brought to pass after the expiration of the said Seventy Weeks, and in the times immediately succeeding the same; that is, a Prophecy of the Destruction of the City of *Jerusalem*, and of the *Sanctuary*, or Temple, by the people of the Prince that was to come; viz. by the *Romans* under *Titus* their prince. All which, coming exactly to pass as was foretold, puts it out of all question, that our *Jesus*, whose Passion we now commemorate, was indeed the CHRIST, *the Messiah the Prince*, who, the Angel tells the Prophet, should come, and be *cut off*; and who was so *cut off* about this precise time, as the Gospel History relates.

The Events which preceded and followed his Coming and Sufferings, having been so punctually fulfilled, is a double confirmation of his being the very same person prophesied of, and afterwards crucified; nor can they, with any probability of truth, be applied to any other. So that we may well say, This is the clearest and most express Prediction in the whole Bible of the Time of his coming and Death.—How well then doth this shew the Wisdom of our Church, in choosing such a Lesson for a day, which immediately precedes the day of his Passion, as cannot but strongly confirm our faith in *Jesus*, and arm us with sufficient weapons to withstand, if not convince, the contradictions and blasphemies of *Jews*, and modern Infidels!—Never was there more cause to strengthen our Belief, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, than in this our profane and incredulous age.

THURSDAY *before* EASTER.

Second Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

JOHN, Chapter xiii.

After reading the Lesson.

IN this Lesson, which contains the History of what passed at our Lord's last Supper with his disciples, is related an extraordinary instance of his great Humility and Condescension in washing their Feet.—The Evangelist, to magnify it the more, takes care in his Preface to so surprising an act of humiliation, and likewise in his account of what passed after that action, to let us understand the very high Dignity of our Saviour's Person; notifying that he, who vouchsafed to humble himself to so low and servile an office, was no other, no less, than the very and eternal Son of God, God of God, the very I AM^a, who had formerly delivered his people out of *Egypt*, and was now *come from God*, to save the world: That *the Father had given all things into his hands*^b: That all who believed, or ever should believe, in Him (of whom the disciples, then present with him at supper, were the representatives and first-fruits), were his own *peculium* and property^c: That he was therefore in a strict and proper sense, their LORD and MASTER (as he himself remarks, *Ye say well, for so I am*^d).

^a Ver. 13, 19. ^b Ver. 3. ^c Ver. 1. ^d Ver. 13, 14.

And the more to confirm our faith in his Divinity, several instances are given us, in this lesson, of his divine Omniscience.—He not only knew that *his hour was come*^e; that the *Father had given all things into his hands*^f; and that he was *come from God, and went to God*^g; and likewise, who should betray him: But knew also, at the very instant, what passed in the heart and thought of the traitor *Judas*; that *the Devil had put it into his heart to betray him*^h; and that his design was, when he left the company and *went out*ⁱ, to inform the High-Priests against him, that they might take him. Nay, our Lord affirms, that *he told these things* [to his disciples], *that when they should come to pass, they might believe in him*^k. He likewise foretold the fall and denial of *Peter*^l.

From all which, as we are naturally and forcibly led, by this wonderful example of Humility in our blessed Redeemer, to imitate the same in our condescensions one towards another, as both our *Lord* and his Apostle *St. Paul* draw the inference and application; so are we compelled by the Christian verity, to believe and adore his eternal and essential GODHEAD.—*I have given you an example*, saith Christ, *that ye should do, as I have done to you*: Even I your *Lord and Master*; yea, even I your *Lord and your God*, as *St. Thomas* afterwards styles him.—And *St. Paul*, seeming to have an immediate eye to this particular act of Debasing, enforces his exhortation to love and humility, from the very same motive the Evangelist uses, to wit, the infinite Dignity and real Divinity of our Lord's Person; so that the Apostle's words are a full and apposite comment on this part of our Saviour's conduct in washing his Disciples feet.—“ Let this
“ mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,
“ who, being in the Form of God, thought it not
“ robbery to be equal with God; but made himself

^e Ver. 1. ^f Ver. 3. ^g Ver. 11. ^h Ver. 2. ⁱ Ver. 21, 27.
^k Ver. 19. ^l Ver. 38.

“ of no reputation, and took upon him the Form of
 “ a servant ^m, &c.”—And if the Most High God so
 humbled himself to save, nay even to serve, us in the
 Form of the lowest menial Servant, how ought we
 to humble ourselves to serve him in the highest in-
 stances of Duty; to mortify the pride of life, and glad-
 ly endure the greatest Shame and Contempt for his
 sake, yea, for the sake of our Christian brethren, be
 they ever so poor, or so mean!—If He so loved Us,
 as to take upon him the Form of a Servant, how ought
 we to love him, and serve him, who is indeed our Lord
 and Master; how ought we to love and serve one an-
 other!—The holy Baptist, though a Prophet, yea,
 more than a Prophet, than whom there had not risen
 a greater among them that were born of women; con-
 fessed himself unworthy to unloose the latchet of *Christ's*
 shoe; yet our Lord, though infinitely worthy of the
 highest honours in Heaven and Earth, stoops to a
 degree of Servility and Debasement still more inferior
 than that, even to wash the very Feet of those who
 were infinitely Unworthy. For so on the comparison
 are we all, and much more so by Nature. And yet
 the humble *Jesus* descended still lower; for he did not
 disdain to wash even the feet of *Judas*.—O astonishing
 Humility!—And yet, who lays it to heart? who fol-
 lows the Example? or, rather, who flies not from it,
 or despises it?—We find but one among the Disciples,
 who, with reluctance accepts, or, with modesty, de-
 clines, so amazing a Condescension.—But his answer
 to *Peter* is an answer to every humble man of heart,
 who may think himself wholly unworthy of any di-
 vine favour, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with*
me ⁿ.—And his vouchsafing to wash the very Traitor's
 feet, is a gracious encouragement to the greatest Sin-
 ners (and alas! are we not all Traitors?), that if we
 come to *Jesus*, and submit to be washed by Him, we
 shall be clean.—Yea, moreover, if our Plunging

^m *Phil.* iii. 5.

ⁿ *John* xiii. 8.

Sect insist on the necessity of a total immersion, let all, who have been washed on the Forehead only, resort on them the answer which Christ made to *Peter*, and be satisfied and assured, that the Sprinkling of Christ's Laver (which represents his Blood) is sufficient, even as every Drop of his precious Blood is, to cleanse the whole man.—What our Lord said to *Peter*, he saith to all, *He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his Feet* [*i. e.* one part of the body]; *but is clean every whit.*—Before his suffering, Christ thought proper to wash the *Feet* only, which represent the Affections of the soul: After his Passion, by the ministry of his Church, he washeth the Head; *i. e.* the Soul itself, the principal part of man.—And this washing is performed by the Asperision of water on the Party's Face in the laver of baptism.





THURSDAY *before* EASTER.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

JEREMIAH, Chap. xxxi.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Chapter is a continuation of a gracious prophecy, concerning the deliverance of the people of Israel from their Captivity, and re-establishment in their own land.—God promises, that upon such return, and much more upon their return to him by a sincere Repentance, he would not only settle them again in an happy and flourishing condition, but make a New Covenant with them, of far greater Blessings and Privileges than the former.—These promises relate immediately to their restoration from the Babylonish captivity; but ultimately, and more especially, to the times of the Gospel, and the Church and Kingdom of Christ. And with a view to this it was, that our Church hath made choice of this Chapter for one of her Lessons on this Day:—This day, I say, on which the same Lord, who dictated this prophecy to Jeremiah, did afterwards institute the Sacrament of his last Supper, and therein renew, ratify, and confirm, his holy Covenant with mankind, according to his Promise in this Lesson. For which reason also he calls it, in the Gospel, “The New Testament (or rather, as it should be rendered, the NEW COVENANT) in his blood* : And in honour of which gracious transaction, this Day is most deservedly called HOLY THURSDAY †.

THURSDAY

* *H xavh diadnun.* Luke xxiii. 20.

† Is not this a Mistake? The Name of this Day being rather stiled *Maunday* Thursday, from the Mandate or Command Christ gave

THURSDAY before E A S T E R.

Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

JEREMIAH, Chap. xxxi.

1. *AT the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.*

AT the same time.] This refers to what went before in the preceding chapter, which foretels the return of the Jews from their *Babylonish* captivity, and their

refettlement in their own land. They having mentioned the rebuilding of *Jerusalem*, with many favours and privileges promised to this people, and also the judgments, which should fall upon the wicked, the prophecy adds, *In the latter days ye shall consider it*^a.—Now, that by *latter days* are to be understood the times of Christianity, appears from many places, not only in the Old, but New Testament; so that, this our Lesson containing plainly a Prediction of the state of the Times under the Gospel-Dispensation, we are called upon, in the first place, and in a more especial manner, to observe, how the Lord promises to manifest himself to his Church, under the Gospel, as a TRINITY in UNITY. For so the Original does more plainly import^b, than can be

gave to his Disciples on that Day of instituting his^c Supper, to love one another—or (if I may be allowed to guess) from washing his Disciples Feet, *a mundandis pedibus*. Ascension Day is more usually called *Holy Thursday*.

^a Jer. xxx. 23, 24.

^b *Will I be the God of all the families of Israel]* The literal version of the *Hebrew* is, will I be FOR [*Elohim*] God to all the families, &c. that is, for a God known and named in three persons (as the name *Elohim* imports, *Gen. i. 1*, &c.) Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, a Trinity in Unity: For so God is now revealed according to this prophecy, and made known to us Christians (who are now the true *Israel* and people of God) in the form of Baptism, and confessed in our Creeds.

expressed in any translation.—And this promise hath accordingly been fulfilled in our Lord's command to his apostles, "To go into all the world, and baptize all Nations in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST^c;" that is, to admit such into Covenant with God, and to be Members of the Christian Church (and none but such), as should believe, and profess their Faith in, the Holy Trinity.

2. *Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword, found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.*

This prophecy of comfort being immediately addressed to the remnant of the Jews, which should return to Jerusalem from their captivity, the Lord here puts them in mind of the like Mercy, which he had formerly shewn to their Forefathers, who were *left of the sword, and found grace in the wilderness*; i. e. had survived the destruction of those who had been cut off for their rebellions in their forty years sojourning in the wilderness: That as he had given Them rest, after their long travels, and settled them in the land of Canaan; so he would give rest to the Jews, returning from their long captivity.—In like manner, but much more so, doth this gracious Promise extend to all that return to him by Faith and Repentance: These will he *cause to rest*, not only in this world, from the burden of their Sins, but hereafter from all Sin and Trouble, in the Kingdom of Heaven. For they shall enter into His rest, where no evil can come, and all tears shall be wiped away from all faces.

3. *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying^d,—*

This, according to some interpreters, is an answer of the Jewish church, owning God's mercies in former

^c Matt. xxviii.

^d *Saying.*] Our old translation hath it, *say they*; so also Pagnin renders it, *inquit populus*, saith the people; which seeming to be the right sense, I have followed it.

times, that the Lord had indeed appeared of old unto her; but that now she seemed to be forgotten and despised.—Such Expostulations with God not uncommon in Scripture (see the case of *Job*, *Moses*, *David*, and *Jeremiah*, &c.): But they are instances of human Frailty, and Infirmities, rather than Sins.—Nay, they are acts of Faith, though a weak one; if so be they are addressed to God, and not to man only, of or concerning God.

—*Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

4. *Again, I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel, thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances * of them that make merry.*

5. *Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria, the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things †.*

Here we have an immediate reply from God, to the Church's complaint,—*Yea, I have loved thee*, not only of old, and in antient times, as the church had expressed herself; but *with an everlasting love*:—My love hath suffered no diminution; it is the same it ever was. Thine indeed hath failed towards me; but Mine hath never failed, nor ever shall. *I have loved thee always, with an everlasting love.*—Christ (for it is He that speaks here to his Church) proceeds

* *Go forth in the dances, &c.]* The joy of Christians is chiefly spiritual; but this doth not exclude those expressions of joy on Festival days and seasons, which they may innocently use, in sober company, among *them that make merry.*

† *Shall eat them as common things.]* Our old translation renders it, *shall make them common*, and explains it in the margin, *shall eat the fruit thereof*, as *Levit. xix. 23. Deut. xx. 6.* Our present copy of the Hebrew signifies *profanabunt*; and so our margin reads, *shall profane them*, the words in the context [*eat them as common things*] being used by way of Explanation. But the Greek interpreters render it *ainoate*, *praise ye*, and seem to have read it *hallelu*, which probably is the truest reading; and then may allude to the eucharistical Hymn at the Sacrament, which is here foretold should take place of those drunken songs to *Bacchus*, which the Heathens used at their Feasts and Compotations.

6. *For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God.*

7. *For thus saith the LORD, Sing with gladness for Jacob^z, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.*

A City, as St. Paul speaks, “which hath foundations [indeed, sure and everlasting] whose Builder “and Maker is GOD^h.”

8. *Behold, I will bring them from the north-country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travaileth with child together, a great company shall return thither.*

9. *They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by*

to encourage her with promises of greater and more endearing tokens of his Love, *I will build thee, &c.* I myself will build thee, and thou shalt be built. — Not only Zorobabel and Nehemiah shall rebuild the City and Temple of Jerusalem; but there shall be a New Jerusalem, which I will build, and send down from God out of heaven (see Rev. xxi. ver. 2.) prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband:

The immediate aspect of this prophecy is, to the return of the captives from Babylon; but the ultimate completion of it is, the call of the Gentiles. And in this view Ephraim represents the Gentile Church, which is added to, and incorporated with the Jewish; so of twain (as the Apostle speaks, Eph. ii. 15.) “Christ making “one.”—None shall be excluded the pale of Christ’s

^z For Jacob.] The Hebrew is, to Jacob; and so Tremellius renders it, *Cantate Jacobo*; which being one of the names of Christ, this singing to him confirms the above note, and may mean the Hymn which should be sung to Christ, and which Pliny observes was used to be sung to him as God, by the first Christians—*Carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem.*

^h Heb. xi. 10.

the rivers of waters, in a strait way wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born.

Church: The lame and the blind, which, under the Law^k, God had refused to accept in sacrifice, are welcome to Christ. So we read, "The blind and the

"lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them^l."—He is the lover of Souls, and rejects none that come unto him, but rather calls and invites them: But then, they must come *with weeping*, and *with supplications*, that is, with Prayers, and Tears of true Repentance, to his throne of grace.—What indeed are we all but *lame* and *blind*? Yet, if we come with a sense of our Blindness and Imperfections, he will lead us; he will heal us; he will refresh us; he will bring us to the waters of comfort; he will put us in a way so strait and plain, that we shall not err nor *stumble*.—A true Repentance ever leads to a right Faith; and a right Faith is the very way that leadeth to life; for it bringeth us to *Christ*, who is the Way and the Truth.

10. *Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.*

11. *For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.*

12. *Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow to-*

The glad tidings of Salvation, and the *Word of the LORD*, that is, *Jesus Christ*, is here proclaimed to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews*; and as both were designed to constitute but one holy Catholic Church, the Promise is, that the *Gentiles* shall be gathered to *Israel*; that is, to the true *Jewish Church*; and both these, being incorporated together, shall be called by a new Name, the *CHRISTIAN Church*. Hence it is said,

^k Deut. xv. 21. Mal. i. 8.

^l Matt. xxi. 14. Ibid. xi.

gether to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine^m, and for oyl, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

13. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

14. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

15. Thus saith the LORD, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping: Rachel weeping for her children, re-

They shall come (even All, both Jews and Gentiles, come) to the height of Zion, and shall flow together, to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, &c. that is to say, for all the comforts and supports of Grace, which are here represented by wheat, and wine, and oil, by dancing and joy. — The ground of which mercies and supplies of Grace is pointed to us in verse the 11th; The LORD hath redeemed Jacob, &c. by which we are taught, that He who redeems, is Jehovah the LORD; consequently that our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is truly and essentially God; and there-

fore Able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

Another cause of rejoicing to the Church, is the sure and certain hope of a joyful Resurrection. This is here represented by a double type; first, by the

^m For wheat, and for wine, &c.] Pagnin's version seems much fuller and stronger, *super frumentum*, &c. *above wheat*, &c. for so the Hebrew [*gnal*] does frequently signify. And it being here so often repeated, shews there is an Emphasis to be laid upon it. It is, doubtless, more consonant to the action, and spiritual state (which the Prophet is here describing), than to the Jewish dispensation, to say, that we shall rejoice more for the goodness of the Lord our Saviour, than for wheat and wine, &c. Besides, it seems a just and beautiful contrast between the Temporal Blessings promised by the Law, and the inestimable Benefits entailed and conferred by the Gospel.

fused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

16. *Thus saith the LORD, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears : for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.*

17. *And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border,*

return of *Rachel's* children (that is, the inhabitants in and about *Ramah*, who were *Benjamites*, and so *Rachel's* children; and here her Tomb stood) from the captivity of *Babylon* to their own land again.—The second figure is the massacre of the *Bethlehemite* children by *Herod*, whereof the first was, in some sort, a type and prediction, as the Evangelist has applied it (*Matt. ii. 17, 18.*): But the accomplishment of the first type, in the return of the *Benjamites* to their own border again, is a pledge and assurance, that those children who were massacred by *Herod*, shall likewise return to life. And if They will return to life, so shall We: So will all that die in the Lord, all that die unto sin, and to the world, by a sincere Repentance.—They shall be made partakers of an happy Resurrection; for to all such extend these words of comfort, and assurance of hope; *Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy (to wit, from the grave); and there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their border.*—All this is ultimately spoken to the Church of Christ, whereof *Rachel* was a fit emblem.

18. *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for*

A further ground of comfort to the Church, and all her true members, is the sure hope of pardon and peace to all that are penitent: And the true penitent is here described and encouraged, under the person and

thou art the LORD my God.

19. *Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.*

and character of *Ephraim*. In order to our becoming such, we are here taught, that the first motion towards Repentance, is the sinner's sense of his sin and misery (which is usually called Conviction). This will necessarily cause a *bemoaning of himself*; yea, bemoaning of himself *Thus, &c.* That

is to say, He will break out into a full and free confession of his faults; he will acknowledge his transgressions; and own that his sufferings are just, and that they come from the hand of a just God, whom he hath offended.—*Thou hast chastised me, &c.*—Then follows an humble prayer to God, as the only author of grace and mercy: *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.* Here we have the two first branches of our holy Covenant, namely, repentance and faith: What follows such renouncing of sin, and turning towards God, must be a total change of mind, and actual amendment; for so *Ephraim* proceeds—*Surely after I was turned, I repented; i. e.* not only sorrowed that I had ever done amiss, but quite changed the whole course of my thoughts and affections (as the *Greek* version ⁿ more fully and properly expresses it), and consequently the whole tenor of my life and actions.

The next advance to render our repentance effectual, is instruction in the knowledge of our duty, as well as of our faults; and then renewing our Covenant with God, in the holy Communion. For so it follows, *After I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh;—i. e.* Not only as one deeply grieved for his sin and folly, who expresseth his concern, when made sensible

ⁿ Μετάνοια, which expresses that turning and true repentance, which consist in an actual and sincere change of mind.

of it, by a blow upon the thigh; but as making a solemn Vow never to be guilty of the like again; for so the putting the hand under the thigh was an antient ceremony of swearing, and making any solemn promise upon Oath (see *Gen. xxiv. 2. and xlvii. 29.*): And to shew, that Repentance is still to be carried on, till it end in a repentance not to be repented of; the penitent goes on, *I was ashamed, yea, was confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.* Not only the last offence, not only the errors of former years, or the crying sins of advanced years, but the follies and offences of *Youth*; yea, the guilt and pollution of Original and Birth-sin; is a continual subject of grief, of shame, and abhorrence, to the true Penitent.

20. *Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.*

This is the answer of God; not directly to the above prayer and confession, but, as it were, to the Church, or the Governors of it. The first question he asks them, concerning the Penitent, is this; *Is he my dear son? i. e.* Hath he been Baptized? Hath he

been made my child by the laver of Regeneration? Is he admitted into Covenant with me? Consequently, hath he a Title to the remission of sins? This representation of God's dealing with Penitents who sue for pardon, is taken from the like proceedings of men, towards such as have given any offence, and apply to be received again into favour.—And from hence we must necessarily infer, that these are questions we certainly ought to put to ourselves, when we first turn to God:—That the Minister especially, who stands in God's stead, should put such questions as these to every convert; no sinner, by the new law, being duly qualified for the forgiveness of sin, but in virtue of the baptismal covenant.—Therefore it is said,

said, WASH and BE CLEAN. The order of Grace, as well as Nature, sets Washing before Cleansing.—The next question of God is, *Is he a pleasant child?* That is, if he be a Son, and the child of God, by Baptismal Adoption and Grace, how has he kept the holy Covenant?—How has he performed his Vow?—How has he behaved?—If as a child, a *pleasant child*, still alive and active, through the power of the Spirit of life, then will certainly follow a declaration of mercy and absolution,—*I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.*

21. *Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the high-way, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.*

As the sins of God's children are often called a *backsliding*°, which implies a falling from grace received, at least means the slips and infirmities of nature; so here the calling upon the *virgin daughter of Israel* (by which we may understand the Soul) to *turn again to her cities*, intimates some defection from the Church.—But whether our sins be direct transgressions against God, such as immorality, profaneness, and irreligion, or more immediately against the Church, by Schism, Heresy, neglect of her Rules and Orders, Disobedience to her Governors; we are here called upon to return to duty, as the *Israelites* did from their captivity *to the cities* they had left.—And whereas such a total conversion is the special business of this solemn penitential season, we have here, in our Lesson, the Method of performing it very accurately described, by *setting up way-marks, making high heaps, &c.* that is to say, when the sinner, like the prodigal in the Gospel, comes to himself, considers and repents; the first thing he does, is to resolve to return to his Father, and to his Father's House; that is, to God, and

* See ver. 22. and Hosea xiv. 4, &c.

the Church.—To do this effectually, he not only turns his heart and his eyes towards home, but he considers the several turnings and windings where he lost his way, and carefully recollects the places, which before misled him, and must now be repassed again, in order to bring him back to the good state from whence he swerved.—These steps of Penitential Conversion are, by the Prophet, very aptly described by *setting up way-marks, making high heaps, setting the heart towards the high-way* (i. e. the king's road, the true way), *going the way he had gone*; that is, going the same way back again, by which he had erred; it being one essential part of Repentance, to Undo, as far as lies in our power, whatever we have done amiss. And one deplorable cause why the number of Penitents, or true Converts, is so very small, in these degenerate times, is this; because so very few have, by proper instruction, been taught to know their Father, or his House. They have not been made acquainted with God, or his Church, nor the true nature and difference of moral good and evil: So that, when their Conscience, or God's Minister, invite them to return, they know neither what they are to return to, nor know the Land-marks, &c. which should direct them:—They never knew the Right way; how then should they know how to find it? or how should they keep in it, when it is found?

22. *How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.*

The soul, although, by regeneration, it hath been made the daughter of God, and of the Church, is continually relapsing into sin, not only through infirmity of the flesh, and prevalence of temptation, but even per-
versely and wilfully *going about* to seek for help and happiness from any other hand, rather than from the LORD. This he complains of here, and chides his *backsliding daughter* for: *How long wilt thou go about?*

about? [*huc & illuc*, here and there, as the *Hebrew* signifies, &c.] But, alas! it is the fickle corrupt nature of all the children of *Adam*. Not only the *Gentile* world, but the people of God, forsook him that made them, and set up for Gods the works of their own hands: Nay, all mankind are too apt to trust in the Creature, more than in the Creator; and, more especially, to love and fear man, rather than God.—How is this wayward temper to be cured? How is this backsliding heart of man to be reclaimed?—Why God tells us here, *He will create a new thing in the earth*; a *new thing* indeed, being contrary to the common course and stated rules of nature, and what had never happened before, nor could ever happen at all, but by a new Creation, an immediate act of almighty Power.—In order then, to gratify this passion of mankind for a Visible God, whom we might safely worship, and not be guilty of Idolatry, and to indulge in us that love of the Creature (especially of our own species, which we are so naturally fond of) without offending the Creator; he is pleased, by a wonderful expedient, to condescend to this frailty of Man; and yet, at the same time, provides to save his own Honour.—This expedient was the Incarnation of his own Son.—This Son therefore, that he might answer both those ends, took upon him our Flesh in the womb of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, that so he might become visible; be seen as Man, and yet worshipped as GOD.—To *Adam* his coming had been promised, as the “Seed of the Woman:” Here also he is promised to his Church under the same character, but in a different Form of expression [*A woman shall compass a man*^p.] But we may say, the first promise referred more immediately to man’s victory over Satan, and avenging on his accursed head the fall and sufferings of lost Mankind; whereas this promise in our Lesson is introduced as an im-

^p. See *Revel.* xii. 13.

mediate act of Grace to Man, not only as an argument of divine Love, why we ought not to *backslide* or fall away from God, but why we may expect the greatest Mercies, the most precious gifts and blessings, which God can give, or man receive.—And these lie summ'd up in the sequel of our Lesson.

23. *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity, The LORD blefs thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.*

24. *And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks.*

25. *For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.*

26. *Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.*

27. *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.*

28. *And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and*

Taking these gracious Promises in their evangelical sense, we may observe (from ver. 23. to ver. 29.), that the great mercy of redemption from Sin, and the power of Satan (whereof the return from the captivity of *Babylon* was a type), is promised as the first blessed effect of Christ's Incarnation.—Secondly, That the Curse, which, by the Fall of man, had been laid both on him, and on the Earth for his sake, should be taken away; and a Blessing be bestowed and entailed on both, for the Redeemer's sake.—Thirdly, That all hatred and strife, yea, all worldly cares and sorrows, should cease; and Peace and Unity, Concord and Charity, be restored.—Fourthly, As, when the sin of the old world was washed away by the waters of *Noah*, God was pleased to confer on the new world the blessing of "Increase" and multiply, and replenish the earth;" so, by the waters of Baptism, thro' the

to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.

29. *In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the childrens teeth are set on edge.*

30. *But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.*

say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the childrens teeth are set on edge; but every one shall die for his own iniquity.—That Christ was to take away Original Sin, appears from that saying of the Baptist, when he pointed to him, and said; “*Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sin of the World^a*”; he saith not sins, but SIN of the world, that common Sin, of which all men stood equally guilty: In like manner the Prophet here describes it by a word in the Singular number, *a sour Grape*.

31. *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of*

the efficacy of the blood of Christ, should a vast increase be made to the Church.

—Fifthly, As by the sin of Adam all mankind was involved in his Guilt, and fell with him; so now, by the Incarnation and Sacrifice of Christ, that original guilt should be done away; and no man whatsoever be condemned for the sin of his Birth, but for his own actual Transgressions. This is signified to us in those words, ver. 29. *They shall*

How plainly doth it appear from hence, that God hath made Two Covenants with mankind! The First, now called Old, because a

^a *Taketh away the sin of the world.*] So St. John i. 19. τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, in the Singular number, i. e. that common sin, in which the whole World was involv'd by the fall of Adam. The Guilt of this sin Christ hath absolutely taken away, by dying for All men. Hence we say in our catechism, “He hath redeemed me, and ALL Mankind.”

Israel, and with the house of Judah :

32. *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them^r, saith the LORD) :*

33. *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

new one hath been made ; the Second, here called *New*, because the first is waxed old, as St. Paul speaks, and done away.——Yet, though this be so plain, the eyes of our modern Enthusiasts are blind to this evident Truth : And their Blindness is the greater, at least the more inexcusable, because they have eyes, and will not see. —The greater difficulty is, how to reconcile the doctrine of the Two Covenants with some other places of Scripture, and with the opinion which our best Divines, and the Christian Church in general, do hold ; that the First Covenant was made

with *Adam*, before he fell, and the second with him after his fall. Whereas, in the books of *Moses*, and divers other places of the Old Testament, the Covenant, which God made with the children of *Israel* at

^r *Although I was an husband unto them.*] The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* hath taken the quotation of this verse verbatim from the Greek translation of the Bible ; but the difference from our *English* translation of the *Hebrew* original is very considerable. See Dr. Hammond's long note on *Heb.* viii. 13. where he endeavours to make it probable, that there is some mistake in the present reading of this verse of our *Hebrew* Bible. But he allows on Dr. Pocock's authority, that the *Hebrew* word, which our *English* translators have rendered—*be an husband to*, doth sometimes (when put in construction, as it lies in the sentence before us) signify to *detect* and *reject*.

As we have then the warrant of an apostle, and the judgment of so great a Critic as Dr. Pocock, to support the version which we have followed in our Comment, we hope the doctrine deduced therefrom will be received with candour, as genuine and unforced.

mount *Sinai*, is spoken of in such terms, and so contradistinguished and opposed to the second, as if it were not only the First covenant, but that it was then first made. The solution to this Question I presume, with humble deference to better judgments, may be found in our present Lesson, ver. 32. if we render the original as the *Greek* version, and as from thence the author to the *Hebrews*, hath done, thus: “Not
 “ according to the covenant that I made with their
 “ fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand,
 “ to lead them out of the land of *Egypt*, because
 “ they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded
 “ them not, saith the Lord.”

But it being a matter of Criticism, to reconcile the difference in the several versions, we pray leave to refer the reader to the marginal note^{*}; and here briefly only to observe, that it appearing, from the definitions and general accounts which we have in Scripture, of the several Covenants which God hath made with man, that there are no more than Two; and that what is called the Covenant, which the Lord made with the children of *Israel* in the wilderness, is, properly speaking, no distinct covenant, being neither the first nor the second, but compounded rather of both; chiefly indeed of the first, but, in strictness of speech, given to the *Jews* rather as a Law, than a Covenant; the statute-part, or law itself, with the sentence of death against every wilful offender, continuing in full force to condemn the guilty as criminals and rebels, without any clause of mercy and grace to save and forgive the Penitent. For so the sanction of the Law of *Moses* runs, “Cursed be he that
 “ confirmeth not all the words of this law, to do
 “ them.”——Where-ever then any overtures of Mercy, or promises of Pardon, occur in the Prophets, or other books of the Old Testament, as tendered to the *Jews* on their Repentance; this we are to look

^{*} See p. 353.

^{*} *Deut.* xxvii. 26. See also *Gal.* iii. 10.

upon as a branch or clause borrowed, as it were, from the Second Covenant, to mitigate and qualify the severity of the First: So that, when we say, the Covenant given the *Jews* was indeed the first, in its full rigour, according to the words of the Law, but softened elsewhere to a milder sense, by God's own interpretation; we are naturally led to think, that God revived not that first covenant with them on purpose, or with design, to condemn them for not performing what man, in his state of perfection, had not been able to do, and what therefore, in his present lapsed condition, was become much more impossible to perform; but rather, that it was to drive men, by a sense and conviction of such Inability, to take hold of that Second Covenant, which had before been offered to us, in and through the mediation of our Redeemer and Saviour *Jesus Christ*: So that the Law, as the Apostle rightly informs us (according to the sense we have taken it in), served only as a Schoolmaster to lead us to Christ; not so much to condemn, as to compel us to fly to him for refuge from the rigour of the Law, or First Covenant, which, like the Avenger of blood, pursued us, to slay, and to destroy, all such as fled not for safety to the city of Refuge, such as is opened and described to us in ver. 33. namely, the Christian Covenant, according to its full extent, and peculiar privileges. We see then, in our Lesson, not only the doctrine of the Two Covenants confirmed; but how, and wherein, they differed; consequently, the Graciousness of the promise of a New Covenant made here by the Prophet, and now fulfilled in Christ.—Much more might be said to improve and illustrate this important point, on which the whole science of Divinity is founded, and the plan and structure of the whole Bible raised; it being in reference to this doctrine, that the Old Testament (as the *Greek Title* ^u most properly signi-

^u Διαθήκη.

fies) is called the *old* COVENANT; and the New Testament is stiled the *new* COVENANT.—See more in the Introduction, &c.

34. *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

The promise of Illumination under the Gospel-covenant (and which indeed is peculiar to it) is, by some, much abused, and to very ill purposes; by others denied; at least, not allowed to be so common and general a Blessing, as is here foretold, and as it is admitted to be by the Apostle, who cites it, *Heb. viii. 11.*—

It is, we must confess, too melancholy a truth, that, in these degenerate times, when the love of many is waxen cold, and true Religion at so very low an ebb, we see but little of this blessed effect of true Christianity. But in the primitive times it was not so: When the Blood of *Jesus* was yet warm, then this prophecy of the holy zeal, heavenly-mindedness, ardent piety, and divine illumination, was every-where (at least more generally) verified in the lives and examples of Christians. Hence Christianity itself was called Light, and its professors, when they embraced it, were said to be “Enlightened^w,” and called “The children of “light^x,” yea, “Light itself^y.”—But, alas! it is not so now; it is rather the reverse.—Yet, if we attend to the context before us, we shall find Truth still in the words of God, though there appear so little of it amongst men.—We are to observe, that the Spirit of Illumination is here promised not indifferently to All Christians, but to those only, *in whose hearts the Law of God is written*, and who still continue in his Covenant, as his people.—Such persons

^w *Heb. vi. 4.*

^x *Eph. v. 8.*

^y *Ibid.*

shall not need to be *taught* of any the knowledge of Christ; for they shall, by an internal sense, and experimental knowledge, not only Believe, but Know and Feel, that "there is no other name under heaven" "given unto men, in whom, and through whom, "we can be saved, but only the Name of our Lord "Jesus Christ".—All such as retain the divine characters, that were engraven by the Holy Spirit on the fleshly tables of their hearts, will *from the least to the greatest of them* know him without a Teacher, because they love him: And they will love him without a Monitor, because they know him; and God himself will teach them this lesson^a.—But although this Objection, taken from the Paucity of holy and truly illuminated Christians in these days, may be so obviated, as to prove that this Scripture hath not been without effect; yet still the Abuse of that light, which the blessed word of God holds forth to us, and which it was intended to convey, is (alas!) too great and too common to be denied or gainsaid.—Some indeed there are, who, on the authority of this text [*That no one shall teach his neighbour, or his brother*], think themselves at liberty to slight the institutions of the Church, and to reject all public interpretation and instruction of her ministry, as useless and unnecessary.—Some, who set up *reason* in opposition to Scripture, and will admit of no other rule of interpretation, but their own Opinion. Others, who discard the use of Reason, and set up what they call the *Spirit*, to be the only true Interpreter of Scripture. Others reject the authority of the Church, in opposition both to reason and the Spirit.—But, as we may be assured, that cannot be true or right reason, which slight the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and the helps he has provided for our Instruction; nor that spirit to be the Spirit of God, which opposes right reason; so we must conclude, That that church can

^a Acts iv. 12.^a See John vi. 45. 1 John ii. 20 and 27.

be no true Church of Christ, which makes herself the sole judge of God's holy Word, and will not allow the people the free use of the Scriptures, or even of reason.

The truth is, this text neither encourages Private Interpretations of Scripture; for that would contradict St. *Peter*, who affirms, that "no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation^b;" much less are we to suppose it was meant to set aside those Teachers, whom God himself has appointed in his Church, and sent to preach his Word; for that would be contrary to his express Command, whereby we are so often enjoined to hear them, and "to seek the law at their mouth^c." To avoid therefore these several Errors, whereby the Rationalist, the Enthusiast, or the Papist, abuse and wrest this passage of our Prophet to their own destruction, we may more safely, and more clearly, because more consistently with the rest of the holy Scripture, understand it of that greater degree of light, which the Gospel of Christ would bring into the world; not only a fuller discovery of divine truth, than the *Gentiles*, by natural reason, were ever able to acquire; but a clearer knowledge of God and heavenly things, than the antient people of God had ever attained to, under the dispensation of the Law.—But wholly to silence the objection, which is and may be urged against that plenitude of light and knowledge, which, by this prophecy, is promised to the Christian Church; we grant, that, as yet, this glorious privilege is fulfilled but in part.—The Apostles, and some of the first Christians, had indeed great degrees of illuminating grace; but the blessing has never been universal.—Not through any defect of light, which hath arisen alike, and with full splendor, on all the members of Christ's Church; but through their own default in not opening their hearts to receive it, nor walking as

^b 2 Pet. i. 10.

^c Mal. ii. 7.

the children of light.—The time will come, when this glorious prediction shall be verified and accomplished in its literal and most extensive sense. Even in that blessed state, when the new heaven, and the new earth, which we look for, are come, and Christ, with his saints, shall reign upon earth; then, and not till then, will this extraordinary prophecy be fully accomplished.—Not only all ignorance and error, not only death and sorrow, but all sin, which is the only cause of error and death, will then be done away, and light and immortality be fully brought to light.—To this beatific state only, are we therefore to refer the final issue of this prediction: For then shall we find its completion most literally true, and all that is here foretold, fulfilled in very deed.—*They shall then no more teach every man his neighbour,—saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.*

35. *Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the LORD of hosts is his Name:*

36. *If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.*

37. *Thus saith the LORD, If heaven above can be measured, and the*

As the foregoing is a promise of that universal righteousness, that perfect and impeccable state of light and true holiness, in the blessed Millennium, when, according to the fullest import of our Lord's prayer, The Will of God shall be done on EARTH, as it is in HEAVEN; that is, shall not only be fully and clearly known, but perfectly and constantly performed, by all that shall partake of that happy state; so the words now before us contain a gracious promise to all such (here called *the seed of Israel*),

foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

rael), that, notwithstanding all that they have done, that is to say, notwithstanding all the Sins they may have committed in the present militant and imperfect state

of the Church, they shall obtain an absolute free pardon of all their iniquities, and their Sins shall be *remembred no more*—not only forgiven, but forgotten, as though they had never been.—The certainty and immutability of this plenary act of Grace is here declared to be as fixed and sure as the *ordinances* of Heaven, to which God hath given a law which shall not be broken^d; and the unlimited extent thereof (to wit, to all manner of Sins and Sinners) is compared to the unmeasurable bounds of heaven and earth. —How comfortable must these Assurances of Mercy have sounded in the ears of an humble Penitent, under the Law! How much more reason have we Christians to rejoice in that fuller confirmation of the perpetuity of these gracious Promises, which our Saviour has given us in his Gospel!—"Heaven" and earth, saith he, shall pass away; but my words "[of Peace and Salvation] shall not pass away^e."—Yea, he hath not only promised, but, as at this time, hath sealed his promise with his Blood.

38. *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.*

39. *And the measuring-line shall yet go forth over-against it, upon the bill*

It is easy to perceive, that we are not to understand this Prophecy of the city of Jerusalem, which was rebuilt by the Jews after their return from Babylon, because we know that city was afterwards destroyed by the Romans; whereas it is here said, *It should not be plucked up,*

^d Psalm cxlviii.

^e Matt. xxiv. 25.

Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

40. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate towards the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down, any more for ever.

nor thrown down, any more for ever; but rather, of the Christian Church, against which neither the gates of hell, nor any earthly powers, should ever prevail. According to this sense, see St. Jerom's Allegorical Exposition, wherein he interprets the tower of Hananeel (which, in the Hebrew, signifies the Grace of God) to denote the Apostles, in whom

the building first began:—The gate of the corner, to mean the two sorts of people, the Jews and Gentiles, joined in one; as the corner of a wall unites two walls, &c.—But may we not rather look forward, and extend our view to that ultimate and most consummate completion of this prophecy, whereof St. John speaks, not as a Contingency, or thing Future, but as present and visible; *i. e.* most infallibly certain? “I John saw the holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.” He saw (in a vision) not a City, but THE holy City, the city which had been before spoken of by the Prophets, *coming down*, &c. and the “Angel, with a golden reed to measure the same, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.” And as we have reason to believe, from the express words of Scripture, and the opinion of approved writers, that there will be New Heavens, and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and that Christ will come to dwell among men, during at least a certain space of time, called by St. John a Thousand Years, and reign with his saints upon Earth; may we not truly say, that the City here foretold of by our Prophet, as a city that SHOULD be built to the LORD; which also Ezekiel so particularly describes^b; and

^f Rev. xxi. 2.

^e Ver. 15.

^b Ezekiel xlviii.

which

which St. *John* saw coming down out of Heaven, after it was so built and prepared; is to be understood of the capital City of Christ's Kingdom, wherein he shall reside, and keep his court, during his said reign upon earth?—Much more might be said on this glorious subject; but our comments on this Lesson having run to so great a length, it must be reserved for our further Meditation on some other Lesson.—In the mean time, the curious reader may consult the Writers and Authors who have treated thereof.—Be it our chief care and ambition to become Citizens and free Denizens of this heavenly City; first, by a sure and legal Admission and Incorporation thereinto; then, securing our Interest, and continuing our Right thereto by a pure and holy Life (for no unclean thing shall enter therein); that so, when Christ shall appear, we may also appear with him in glory. Amen, Amen.

*O urbs, quando ego te aspiciam? quandoque licebit
Ducere sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ?*



GOOD



GOOD FRIDAY.

PROPER LESSONS.

The First	}	for M. Pr.	{	Gen. Ch. xxii. to Ver. 20.
Second				Jobn, Chap. xviii.
The First	}	for Ev. Pr.	{	Isaiab, Chap. liii.
Second				1 Pet. Chap. ii.

P R E F A C E.

THE service of the Church, and the course of this solemn Season, having now led us to the last scene of our blessed Saviour's Sufferings, and his actual accomplishment of that Death upon the Cross, which the Old Testament, by sundry types and predictions, had fore-shewn to us in the Law and the Prophets; she now, in her First Lesson for this Morning, calls on us once more to consider and attend to that most extraordinary Type of our Redemption, exhibited to us in Abraham's voluntary oblation of his son Isaac.

This history was before proposed to our meditation on the First Sunday in Lent; and is now repeated; but we may justly presume, with somewhat a different view: Then chiefly to encourage and animate our Obedience, by the noble example of Abraham, to submit to the discipline of Mortification and Self-denial: But now (as the Lord called on Abraham the SECOND time from heaven, to bless him; so) the Church invites us to a second and more particular review, not only of the same illustrious Example, but of the most lively Emblem that any-where occurs in Scripture,

Scripture, of the grand Mystery of our Redemption, and the unspeakable love of God to mankind.

In every circumstance attending this wonderful transaction, there is so great a brightness, so dazzling a lustre, both in the Example, and the great End, which the type presignified, that nothing but the eagle-eye of Faith is capable of contemplating all the glories that it sheds around. No wonder then to see carnal reason shutting its eyes to a Light, which they have not strength to bear.

What Reason, what mere Human Thought, what History, fabulous or true, can find a parallel or precedent in Nature, to equal all, or any, of that Constellation of Virtues, which are so conspicuous in the character of that extraordinary man? Whether we consider his disinterested Love of God, and absolute Submission to the divine will; his inviolable Fidelity, and unshaken Resolution; his grandeur of soul, and inviolable Patience; a Faith, without the least wavering or diffidence; Obedience, without hesitation; Resignation without reserve; and a complete victory over all the Passions, Affections, and Softnesses, of human nature.—In him we see silenced all the plausible suggestions of reason, and seeming Contradictions of the divine will and promises; the love of a Son, his Only son, the son whom he loved; all the regards of Wife, Family, Posterity; all expectations of Blessings settled on him and his posterity in Isaac; in him, I say, we see them all silenced and over-ruled by the superior and ascendant passion of his soul, the Love of GOD.

'Twas Love, divine Love alone, that wrought this great miracle of Virtue, this unprecedented example of Obedience.—But although this whole World cannot afford so perfect and complete a Precedent, the Heaven of heavens will.—There we shall find the glorious Archetype and Original of this transcendent act of Love! Nor indeed could such an exalted virtue have had its birth elsewhere; nor ever have adorned the character of our Patriarch, had it not been derived from thence, even from the Father of Lights, whence cometh every good and perfect gift; no perfection
of

of any kind being possible to Man, which is not originally subsisting in, and derived from, the Divine Nature^a.

What then is this generous action of Abraham, which, with so much justice, we extol and admire, but a transcript and pattern of the great mystery of our Salvation, "which
" God had purposed in himself before the foundation of
" the world, according to the riches of his grace, that in
" the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather
" together in one all things in Christ^b?"

A supereminent Love to GOD was the impulsive cause of Abraham's oblation of his Son, his Only Son: It was the like noble and most endearing motive, the Love of Man, which prevailed with the most High God to give his Son, his Only-begotten Son, to be a propitiation for the sins of the world.—But still this act of love in God and Abraham, though alike in kind, is infinitely differenced by the Objects. God was superlatively *Worthy* of Abraham's love, and of the love of all the son's of Men, by the superlative *Excellency* of his Nature, and especially his *Goodness* to mankind; but man wholly *Unworthy* of the love of God, even as a Creature; but much more so, as a Sinner. Hence it is, that though we love and serve God ever so much, we never can love and serve him enough.

In the prompt and meek submission of Isaac, and the steadiness, magnanimity, and prudence, of the Patriarch's conduct, we may legibly discern the like characters in every

^a Derived from the Divine Nature.] This remark, if well considered and pursued, affords a most cogent Argument against the oppugners of the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. For instance, How could Man have the power of Generation, and begetting a Son in his own Likeness, and of his own Nature, were it not originally, and after a Divine Manner, in God? How could man have a Spirit, were it not essential to the Divine Nature to have a Spirit, as well as Be a Spirit? No; it is as impossible those Faculties and Powers should be in Man, except they first existed in God, as it is that an Effect can subsist without a Cause; or, as all must confess it absolutely impossible, and absurd, to believe, that Man, or any other Creature, could have Life or Being, if Life and Being were not primarily, and essentially, in the Creator.

^b Eph. i. 9, 10.

line of that stupendous æconomy of man's Redemption, from the first step which was revealed to us, until its consummation (as on this Day) in the death of Christ. So that what the Apostle remarks of the Tabernacle, is equally applicable to this most eminent of all the antient Types, that it "serveth unto the example and shadow of heavenly things; as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the Tabernacle. See (saith he) that thou make all things according to the Pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Heb. viii. 5, &c.

A pious meditation will find abundant matter in this extraordinary history for enlarging upon, as well as graces to copy after, till, fired with the free and unmerited Goodness of God, in sending his Son to die for us, and the Son's inexpressible Love and Condescension, in undertaking and accomplishing the great work of our Redemption, we be constrained to cry out, O the height! the depth! the length! the breadth! &c.

—————O unexampled love!
Love no-where to be found less than divine!

MILTON.

And as these reflections must needs kindle in our hearts great zeal and love for the Author and Finisher of our Salvation, nothing could be more proper than such a Lesson as this, to prepare us for entering upon the sad catastrophe of his real sufferings, as they are described in the other Scriptures for this Day's service;—prophetically, by the Psalmist and Prophet^c; historically, by the Evangelist^d. Nor can any thing better dispose us for the right application, use, and benefit, of them, than the contents of the Epistle^e, and of the Second Lesson for the Evening^f.

To conclude (in the words of Dean Stanhope); "It is very obvious, upon the whole, what mighty consolations we may, we ought to take even in the sad solemnity of this Day.—What tears of joy are fit to be mingled with

^c Psalm xxii. Isaiah liii.

^d John xviii.

^e Heb. x.

^f 1 Pet. ii.

" those of grief and penitence! The latter we should be
 " stupid and inhuman not to pay to the bitter agonies of
 " our dearest Master; the former we should be unthankful
 " to him, and cruel to ourselves, not to give to the happy
 " effects of those sufferings he so graciously condescended
 " to undergo for us. But to make both effectual to the
 " great ends designed, let us, inflamed with zeal and gra-
 " titude, and love unfeigned, endeavour, for our own
 " particular, and most ardently intercede for the rest (as
 " the best of Churches teaches us^s), that the innumerable
 " benefits of this precious Bloodshedding may have their
 " full extent, and free course; that we, and the whole
 " Church of Christ, may receive remission of sins, and all
 " the other blessed effects of his Passion; and that he, who
 " hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, obla-
 " tion, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world,
 " would cause his way to be known upon earth, and his
 " saving health to the yet dark and unbelieving nations:
 " And that all who do already know, may walk worthy
 " of it.—And O that the Death this day tasted for Every
 " man, may be effectual to the saving of every man!
 " Even so, blessed Jesus, by thine agony, and bloody sweat,
 " by thy cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us." Amen.

^s In the collect for the day.

First Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

GENESIS, Chap. xxii. to Ver. 20.

The design of man's redemption typified in the history of Abraham's offering up his only son.

1. **A**ND it came to pass
 after these things,
 that God did tempt Abra-
 ham, and said unto him,
 Abraham. And he said,
 Behold, here I am.

ABRAMHAM had already
 given many eminent
 proofs of his Faith and
 Virtue, by a chearful and
 ready Obedience to all God's
 commands. But it pleased
 God

God to tempt, *i. e.* to try, him once more; that, by this last and finishing testimony of his Fidelity, he might become not only the great Father, and standing Pattern, of the Faithful in succeeding generations; but, above all, that he might, by a lively type, represent that wonderful Love of God, which we this Day celebrate, in giving his own, his Only Son, whom he loved, to be a sacrifice and atonement for the sins of the world.

2. *And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

enter into this surprising trial of *Abraham*, and dwell a while on every one of those wounding circumstances, which attended it; that so, when Heaven shall call on thee to part with any worldly Comforts, be they ever so dear, ever so innocent, the Faith and Obedience of this holy Patriarch may work in thee as ready and chearful a compliance.

3. *And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.*

4. *Then on the third day Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.*

Accordingly the Divine Majesty commanded him to repair to mount *Moriab*, and there to slay and offer up his Son *Isaac*; not only the son of his love, his Only son, but the son of Promise; that Son, in whom all the Families of the earth were to be blessed.—O my soul,

See and admire the diligence and zeal of the faithful *Abraham*!—How early up was he to execute the command of his God, tho' so harsh and afflicting to flesh and blood!—How sluggish are we to perform the easiest and most reasonable tasks of Duty!—How steady He, how determined and prepared, even to part with the greatest Blessing of Life, the

the very joy of his eyes, and staff of his age!—But alas! how tardy and loth, how partial and reserved, are we to give up one poor worldly Enjoyment, for the sake of God!—He, every day, draws nearer and nearer to the destined place of execution: We think ourselves happy, if we can but remove to a further distance from all that is displeasing to carnal sense.—He *lift up his eyes* to look for the appointed spot, while it was yet *afar off*:—We shut our eyes, or turn them away from the Cross that lies in our way, when bidden to take it up, and bear it.—How ought this to shame us into a more active and ingenuous compliance with the will of of Heaven!

Abraham till now was silent; but his Passions, his Reason, his carnal Affections, and all the faculties of Nature, were not silent: How earnestly did they plead with him, how fiercely reproach, how vehemently condemn, this unnatural action! but he opened not his mouth.—In this, prefiguring the like unshaken Patience of the Son of God, when the High-Priests and Rulers, when *Pilate* and *Herod*, urged him with questions; when his enemies vehemently charged him, and the witnesses falsely accused him; he stood silent, and answered not.—Thus the holy *Abraham*, thus the most holy *Jesus*, have taught us the best way to silence the clamours, the importunity, the impertinent solicitations of Nature, and a vain world, when they contradict the Will of God. Silence, in such a case, is ever the best Answer.—*Abraham* knew whom he had believed;—a good, a gracious God: And is he not the same to us?—Faith had taught him not Argue, but to Obey: He was sure, that what God commands, must be good; that what he promises, is infallible; and therefore leaves the issue wholly to him, and trusts unto the end.

6. *And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together.*

How full of Mystery is every word of this verse! how emphatically expressive of the great and astonishing scene of our Redemption! Behold in *Isaac* the meek and humble *Jesus*, bearing the load of his own Cross.

And who lays it upon him? not the Jews, not his enemies, not any compulsion, but his Father.—So *Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his Son.* *Abraham* himself carries the *knife*, and the *fire*, the emblems of divine Justice: But the Son carrieth the *Wood*, that type of the Cross, and symbol of Mercy.—And then it is added, *They both went together.*—Observe well, O my Soul, these words, *Both of them went together*; and thou mayst extract divine honey out of this stony rock, this seemingly barren and indifferent passage.—As God, the Father and Son, are not separated in their operations, so neither is divine Justice divided from the divine Mercy. *Both go together*, both unite, in this wonderful transaction of man's Redemption.—Believe this, and thou wilt never despair; believe this, and thou never wilt presume. Go to the Cross of Christ; there thou wilt find Righteousness and Peace met together; Justice and Mercy going hand in hand *together*, and kissing each other.

7. *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold, the fire, and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?*

Where is the lamb, &c.
—A wounding question! For whatever firmness the holy Patriarch had hitherto shewn; however he had calmed and silenced the inward conflicts of his own breast; this question from *Isaac* could not but cut him

to the quick; could not but renew his struggle with Flesh and Blood. But Faith had gained so complete a victory over Nature, that, although we cannot doubt, but the contention was great, and the fight sharp, between them; yet we do not find the least symptom of Reluctance, the least relentings of heart, the least impression made on his Faith and Resolution:—O heroic Courage! O unexampled Constancy! which very few can imitate, fewer equal, none excel,——but He that on this Day offered up Himself on the Cross, for the sins of the world.—*Abraham* might offer, and *Isaac* (in a figure) die; but no Death but *Christ's* can save a lost world.

Abraham's Action, and

8. *And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together.* *Abraham's* Words, are prophetic. They both fore-shew, in the liveliest manner, the great Sacrifice of the death of *Christ*. Possibly he might not himself ap-

prehend the true or full meaning of the action he was about, nor of the answer he made to his Son; yet we cannot but observe how the Holy Spirit, acting and speaking by this holy man, directs both what he says and does, not only to quadrate with virtue and truth, but evidently and most significantly to point unto Him that was to Come, the great Martyr of this Day. For what could be truer than this, *God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering*? In some sense, O blessed *Abraham*, this was verified in the *Ram*, that was soon after caught in the thicket, and offered up instead of thy Son. But this was more properly providing THEE with a *Lamb* for a Sacrifice. The *Lamb*, which God provided for *Himself*, was no other than his own Son.—In other Sacrifices, God is pleased to accept what is Ours, and what We provide: But for the Redemption of the world, for the Salvation of mankind, not all Mankind, not all the World, can furnish a Sacrifice sufficient.—This burnt-offering, and

all-sufficient ransom, He must *provide Himself*: The *lamb* for this Sacrifice must be peculiarly and properly his Own. And who is that, but that *Lamb* of God, the meek and humble *Jesus*?—His Own, not by Creation, as all other things are, but by Nature; yea, by Generation, His Own; co-equal, co-essential, with himself. For thus it was, that “GOD (*i. e.* the “ Godhead or Divine Nature) was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”—And this Agreement, and inseparable Unity of the Father and the Son, is again intimated to us for our instruction, and for our comfort, in the same significant words, which we heard before in verse 6. *So they went both of them together.*

9. *And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.*

What passed between Abraham and his Son, before he bound him, and laid him on the altar, is not related. And, possibly, a veil is drawn over so passionate a scene, as more easy to imagine than describe.

Other writers^h have conceived, and dressed up, very tender and pathetic speeches, between the Father and the Son, on this mournful occasion.—But, O my soul, dwell not thou on curious speculations, of what might be the natural sentiments of such a Father, and such a Son, at that time; but rather set thyself in *Isaac's* place, and in him read thy Own Condition.—See thyself tied and bound with the chains of Sin; laid upon the altar of Divine Justice; the *Fire* ready, and the *Knife* lifted up to slay thee.—This assuredly has been thy case; this, as a child of wrath, and the natural descendant of *Adam*, thou wast doomed to have suffered. And the mortal blow had certainly been struck, had not a gracious call from Heaven arrested the hand of

^g 2 Cor. v. 19.

^h See *Josephus*.

Death, and reprieved thee.—Let this consideration alarm all thy powers to reflect on the danger thou hast been exposed to, and the ineffable Mercy of thy escape.—Let the quick sense of such a Danger magnify the grace of thy Deliverance; let so miraculous, and undeserved, a Mercy, inflame thy Love and Gratitude to him that redeemed thee; yea, who, on this day, substituted Himself in thy stead, and died to save thee.

10. *And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.*

11. *And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I.*

12. *And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.*

Abraham's Obedience was now perfect; his Faith tried to the uttermost, and found genuine and sincere. And therefore the *Angel of the Lord* suddenly interrupts him, forbids him to proceed any further, and commends him.—Never was the voice of God so welcome, so seasonable, so sweet, as now.—It was the Trial that God intended, not the Fact. In all the Temptations he leads us into, he means not our Grief, much less our Fall, but our Benefit: That

is the design of every Cross: We sow in Tears, that we may reap in Joy.

Now I know that thou fearest God.—And did not God know this before? Yes, doubtless; but it was necessary that Men and Angels, nay, that *Abraham* himself, should know it. The Good Angels, that they might adore the Mercy of God towards men; the Bad, that they might revere his Justice, in all the favours he shewed to that good man: Men, that they should imitate so excellent a pattern of Faith and Obedience: And *Abraham* himself have the unspeakable comfort of this Testimony of his Sincerity; and be assured that his fear of God was genuine and true,

because he approved his Love to his Maker to be greater than the love he bare to his Son, his Only Son, whom he loved.—This holy Experience is one of the sweetest fruits of Tribulation and Sufferings, and the best and most useful kind of Assurance.

13. *And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked; and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son.*

Listen all the world (for every Soul therein is equally concerned in this wonderful Transaction), listen to a story, whose every word is big with Mystery, every mystery full of Love and Mercy.—The greatest affair that ever was acted on the stage of this world, is this Day presented to us both in

the type, and in the Substance.—And who can forbear to adore the admirable Providence, as well as Goodness of God, in so exactly adapting the one to the other, the Figure to the Truth?—Nothing less than infinite Wisdom could, so long beforehand, draw so lively and true a Representation of our Redemption by Christ, in the Type; nothing less than infinite Mercy could so design, and so bring about, that Redemption, as related to us in the truth of this Day's history.—*Isaac* intended for sacrifice, and yet escaping, is Man condemned, and then set free.—The *ram* dying, and *Isaac* released, is our Saviour in two Figures; in the one, Dying; Restored, in the other: *Isaac* resigned and given up to death, and yet Living, is our Lord suffering, and raised again to live for ever.—Again, *Abraham*, lifting up his eyes, sees the ransom of his Son: Lift we up our eyes to God in every Distress; from thence will come our help.—We shall never want a Saviour, if in Faith we lift up our eyes to Heaven.

Abraham had said before, by the impulse of a Prophetic Spirit, *The Lord will provide himself a lamb.* He now

14. *And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said*

to this day, *In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.* now repeats it with a fuller assurance of Faith; a faith confirmed by the seasonable substitution of the ram,

caught by the horns in the thicket, for the ransom of his Son, that God would undoubtedly provide himself a Lamb in due time, who should redeem Mankind. And in token of this faith, and to perpetuate it to his posterity, till the *Messiah* should come, he affixes his prophecy [THE LORD WILL PROVIDE] as the Name of the place; the ever memorable and distinguished Place, which God himself had shewed to him in the mount; the place, not only where *Isaac* was to have suffered, and where the *Ram* had actually suffered in his stead, but the very spot, where, in process of time, the very Saviour of the world should sufferⁱ. Thus we see he passes from the Type (which possibly he understood not before) to the Archetype, the true Lamb of God, who, in time to come, was to be offered up on the altar of the Cross. And let this Example teach us the use of this, and all other Types of Christ, in the Old Testament, that we also may pass from the Figure to the Substance.—Christ bears testimony to this act of *Abraham's* Faith; “He rejoiced to see^k my day; he saw it, and was glad^k.”—And what the sacred Historian adds [*In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen*] seems added to second and justify *Abraham's* Faith, and to confirm Ours, in the truth and certainty of God's Word and Promises.—This day of CHRIST'S PASSION, which we now commemorate, bears witness to the punctual accomplishment both of the Type and the Prediction.

Now follows *Abraham's* Blessing, after a sharp and severe Trial.—And who would not be content to undergo such a trial, for the

15. *And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time:*

ⁱ See *Lightfoot*.

^k *John* viii. 56.

16. *And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son ;*

17. *That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.*

11. *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice.*

will not sacrifice with *Abraham*.

19. *So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up, and went together to Beer-sheba ; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.*

fake of obtaining so glorious a Blessing?—We have all the same opportunities which he had ; and it is every day in our power to earn the like Benediction. Whatever is dearest to us upon earth, that is our *Isaac* ; if we can sacrifice *This* to God, we may then be assured, that that very same promise from Heaven is directed to us likewise, *In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee.*—God more than doubles what we part with for his sake. But they must not expect to be Blessed with *Abraham*, who

When *Abraham* had finished his Sacrifice, he went to *Beer-sheba*, and dwelt at *Beer-sheba*.—This incident is not so barren as not to afford a most useful Instruction.—

Nothing is useless, nothing impertinent, nothing indifferent, in the holy Scriptures ; no part thereof is of any private interpretation ; nothing therein, but what is quick and powerful ; no word but what has Life in it ; they are truly Living Oracles¹.—From this passage then we may draw the following most useful Comment. *Abraham* has hitherto been held forth to us as a bright and shining Light, both in his Personal and Mystical character ; both as a good Man, and as the Emblem of *Christ*. But this circumstance of his going to *Beer-sheba* (after

¹ Acts vii. 38. ὁὖτοι ζῶντα, strictly rendered, is living oracles.

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his Sacrifice was ended), and *dwelling there*, may put us in mind (and happy for us if it doth so, whether this be the right meaning of the Allegory or no), that after we have commemorated the Death of Christ, our constant care should be to keep close to our Baptismal vow, the solemn *oath* we made at the waters of Baptism, that *Beer-sheba*, or Well of the Oath, where we swear unto God on our entring into Covenant with him.—Hither is our most proper remove from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; here we must *Dwell*, and have our fixed Abode, while we sojourn upon earth.



GOOD



GOOD FRIDAY.

First Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

ISAIAH, Chap. liii.

This whole chapter represents to us so clear and lively a description of the Passion of our Saviour, that, according to St. Jerom, one might take it for the work of an Evangelist rather than of a Prophet: Or, as another author, with good reason, speaks, we may title it, The Passion of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, according to Isaiah.

1. *WHO hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?*

Saint John in his gospel explains this passage of our Lesson; and informs us, that, by this exclamation of the Prophet, the Holy Ghost intended to remark the strange obduracy of the *Jews*, who, notwithstanding all the mighty and wonderful works which *Jesus Christ* had done to convince them that he was the Messiah, whom they had so long expected, yet still remained incredulous—"Though," saith he, he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of *Esaias* the Prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report?

"and

“and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” And then the Evangelist adds, “These things said *Esaias*, when he saw his glory, and spake of him,” Chap. xii. 37, &c.

2. *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground:—*

We have then the Testimony both of an Apostle and Evangelist, that he, whom the Prophet here speaks of, is the Lord *Christ*.

Even an Enemy^a was compelled to own it.—That Christ is the *arm of the Lord*, appears also from sundry other Scriptures. He is likewise called here, and in other places, a *Plant* or *Branch*. By the first title is described his Glory, as *St. John* calls it, meaning his almighty Power, and essential Divinity; by the latter, his state of Humiliation and humanity.—He is said to *grow up as a tender plant*, to express his human Birth and Incarnation:—As a *branch* from the *root of Jesse*, to denote the meanness of his human descent, and great humility:—To *grow out of a dry ground*, to shew his supernatural production, contrary to the stated powers of Nature, which has no energy or virtue to propagate any thing out of the *dry* earth.—His Virgin Mother is also intimated hereby, who must have remained (while a virgin) fruitless and barren as the *dry* ground, had not the power of the Highest overshadowed her, and given her a miraculous Conception.—Observe we further, the Prophet, being about to describe the Sufferings of Christ, speaks first of his Birth; because he was therefore Born, that he might die;—“for, for this very end (as the gospel tells us^b), came he into the world:” And that he might lay down his Life with the same readiness on the Cross, with which he had assumed it in the Womb.

^a *S. White*, in his commentary on *Isaiab*, in which he endeavours to evacuate the evangelical sense of the prophet.

^b *John* xviii. 37. and xii. 27.

—*He hath no form nor comeliness: and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.*

3. *He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

He hath no form, &c.; and yet the Psalmist saith, "Thou art fairer than the children of men, full of grace are thy lips". And the Canticles, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand".

But here, he is described as having *no form*, no Beauty, *that we should desire him.*—

We answer: Both are true; but in different respects.—

To an Unbelieving soul, *Christ* is less comely than any of the children of men; but to every true Believer he is much fairer than any mere man; to such an one he is lovely in his very Sufferings, and amiable in his lowest estate.—But the proud world abhors all Sufferings, and despises all that suffer. To carnal persons, the visage and appearance of the suffering *Jesus* are marred more than any man: They *reject* and *despise* him as a *man of Sorrows*, an object of Grief and Contempt, an enemy to all joy and pleasure; therefore they *hide their faces from him*, as unworthy of their notice or regard; they see no value or worth in him, and therefore *esteem him not*. But Faith hath a more quick and piercing eye; it penetrates through this outward veil, and discerns within, that very image of Pulchritude, and perfect Beauty, which the Philosopher^e rather wished, than ever expected, would become visible, to charm all mankind.—Whereas our Prophet, at the same time he foresaw the mean appearance, and contemptuous treatment, of this Incarnate Virtue, is affirmed also to have seen his Glory, even the perfection and plenitude of Wisdom and Power under the disguise of Weakness and Shame. So that we may well say with the Apostle, "The Cross, which

^e *Psal.* xlv.

^d *Cantic.* v. 10.

^e *Plato, apud Ciceron. de offic.*

“ to the *Jews* proved a stumbling-block, and unto
 “ the *Greeks* foolishness, is to them which are called,
 “ Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God ^f.”

—And herein will appear the reason, and consummate wisdom, of this extreme Humiliation of the Son of God, if the following considerations be attended to :

Man by Sin lifts himself up against God; and thereby imitates the pride of Satan; the sin of Pride, as it separates from God, so is it likewise the source of all other Sins.—For this reason the Son of God, who undertook to heal the Soul of man, applies his medicine to this first cause of our Disease. To this end was he pleased to abase himself so deeply as to empty and make himself of no reputation; to submit to the vilest indignities, to cruel mockings, scourging, crucifying; to become as a mock-king on a stage, as the scorn and outcast of the people; to give his cheek, without resistance, to him that smote him; to be filled full of reproach ^g.—Thus the Remedy he prepared for the cure of our Pride, equalled, yea, rather exceeded, the malignity of the Distemper.—Pride had taken deep root in the heart of man, and must be searched to the bottom; it was necessary therefore that the pains, which *Jesus* endured in our stead, and for our sakes, should bear proportion to the Malady. Nay, we must confess, and truly believe, that the pains, the insults, and indignities, which he endured for us, formed in Him a degree of infinite suffering and humiliation; because of the infinite Greatness and Dignity of his Person.—And happy for us that it did so; seeing otherwise the atonement he offered could not be a Satisfaction equal to the infinite justice of God.

Nothing is more miserable than Man in himself; yet nothing more insensible than he of his Misery!—

4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him

^f 1 Cor. i. 23.

^g Lam. iii. 30.

stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

This it is makes him so ungrateful to his Saviour, to his best Friend, and kindest Benefactor.—Lo, the holy and affectionate *Jesus* comes, in tender compassion to our souls; to *bear our griefs*, and to *carry our sorrows*; yet, so blind to his Love, and our own Demerits, are we, as to *esteem him stricken of God*—For his Own, rather than for Our, sins; and to look on his blessed Passion as a Punishment, rather than a Sacrifice. Yea, some there be in this degenerate age, who are profane enough to condemn the innocent Lamb of God, as worthy of the death he suffered: Others, so very indifferent, as to give themselves no concern at all, whether his Sufferings were upon his own account, or Theirs.—Such *Gallionism* is even got into our very Church! So that too many, who call themselves Christians, have still the hearts of *Jews*; not only denying the Lord that bought them, but reviling his last moments, and deriding, or at best slighting, his bitter Sufferings.

5. *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*

6. *All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep be-*

Thus far have we a lively and most affecting description of our Lord's Passion, or State of Humiliation, together with the Cause of his sufferings assigned; to wit, *First*, The great Love of God to mankind, in giving his Son to die for us.—*Secondly*, The mortal nature of Sin, which could no otherwise be healed, or atoned for, but by his Death.—He was perfectly innocent: We the Criminals, that deserved to die: So that *he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace* (i. e. the only

fore her shearers is dumb,
so he openeth not his mouth.

8. He was taken from
prison, and from judgment :
and who shall declare his ge-
neration ; for he was cut off
out of the land of the living :
for the transgression of my
people was he stricken.

9. And he made his grave
with the wicked, and with
the rich in his death, because
he had done no violence, nei-
ther was any deceit in his
mouth.

10. Yet it pleased the
LORD to bruise him, he
hath put him to grief :—

only means of reconciling us
to God) was upon Him, and
with His stripes we are healed.

—Nor was the Remedy pro-
portioned only to the Disease,
so as to extend to all man-
kind ; but exactly adapted
and suited to every part, both
of our Nature, and of the
Distemper, wherewith it was
infected ; as may appear
more plainly from the fol-
lowing particulars :—The
first *Adam* fell by eating of the
forbidden Tree ; therefore
the second *Adam* was hanged
on a Tree.—By that Fall
mankind were so sorely bruif-
ed, that the whole head was

sick, and the whole heart faint ; from the crown of
the head to the sole of the foot, there was nothing but
bruises, and putrifying sores ; therefore the holy *Jesus*
endured pain in Every part, to expiate the sins which
every part of us had committed.—For the wicked
imaginings of Our Heads, upon *his* was platted a
Crown of Thorns : For the Lust, the vanity, the
envy, of Our eyes, His were bedewed with Tears :
For Our proud Looks, his Face was spit upon : For
the softness and effeminacy of our Bodies, His was cast
upon the ground, and then nailed to an hard Cross :
For the wanton Sounds, the idle or profane Discourses,
which our Ears have been delighted with, His ears
were wounded with bitter Scoffs, and blasphemous Re-
vilings : We have offended in our Smell by luxurious
perfumes, and sweet odours ; therefore his Smell was
annoyed by the stench of *Golgotha* : Our Taste hath
grievously sinned by Gluttony and Drunkenness, De-
licacy and Indulgence ; his was punished and insulted
with Vinegar and Gall : Our Feet were swift to shed
blood ;

blood; therefore his feet were nailed to the Cross: Our Hands have been defiled, and his were bathed in Blood.—Thus we see, his Temples were tormented with the Thorns, his Cheeks with the rude Buffets, his Face with the spittle, his Joints with the strains, his Body with the stripes, which We deserved. And lastly his sacred Heart was pierced with a Spear for the unchaste, malicious, covetous, ambitious, Thoughts, Desires, and Affections, which lodged and reigned in Ours.—O most holy, most loving, Redeemer, who sufferedst so much for us all, impress a feeling sense of these thy Sufferings on our minds, that all and every one of us may know how much we stood thee in; how very dear it cost thee to Redeem! That so, by the vast total of the Debt discharged, we may make an estimate of thy Love.—But, alas! how can we calculate the full Price of thy Sufferings, who cannot conceive, much less endure, the least of those pains, which were laid upon thee?—Thy Sufferings were infinite, because thy Love was so; to which ours can have no proportion, but by setting no bounds to our Gratitude, no limits to our Obedience, no measure to our Love.

—When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

II. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:—

Our Lesson now proceeds to set before us the state of our Lord's Exaltation, or the blessed Effects of his sacred Passion, both with respect to Himself and Us.—As to himself, the immediate consequences of his Sufferings are, *First*, That *he shall see his seed*, i. e. those, who, through Faith in him, are made the Children of God.—In one of the Lessons for our Lord's Birth-day, we are told, that one of his Titles should be EVERLASTING FATHER^h; and Chris-

^h *Ij. ix. 6.*

tians in Scripture are frequently called his *Seed*¹; and are properly, and more immediately, so; because he Begets them by the new and second birth unto God.—God the Father is Our Father by right of Creation, and as the Author of our Being; God the Son is our Father (*i. e.* the Father of Believers) by Regeneration and Adoption; and so, the Author of our Well-being: According to that of St. *John*^k, “As many” as received him, to them gave he power to become “the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his” Name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the “will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of” God.”—During his sojourn in the flesh upon earth, few or none did he thus beget: His very disciples believed not on him; *i. e.* as they ought, with a right filial Faith; but after his Passion, when *his soul* had been *made an offering for sin*, then he soon saw the *travail of his soul* in a most numerous *Seed*, an holy Offspring, a multitude of Children, begotten at once, no less than three thousand souls born to him in one day¹, even the very first day of his Spirit’s descent upon the spouse the Church.—Secondly, That *he shall prolong his days*: This is added as a further reward of Christ’s sufferings—although he had committed no sin (consequently was not subject to the Law of Death; neither could he have died at all, but by his own free consent and choice); yet he suffered himself to be *cut off out of the land of the living* for Our sakes; for Our sins.—The recompence of Reward, which he merited for this, was, that he should *prolong his days*; it being fit that he, who submitted to the power of Death, should obtain for Himself and Us, not only a restoration to Life, but Immortality, a life Eternal, and never more to have an end.—Thus by dying he destroyed Death; by losing Life, he found it; yea, a long Life, even for ever and ever.

¹ *Pf.* xxii. 3c.^k *Chap.* i. 12, 13.¹ *Act.* ii.

Moreover, Thirdly, it is said, *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.*—And what was this *Pleasure* of the Lord, but the Salvation of mankind, and the great work of our Redemption?—To create a World out of Nothing was an act of divine Power; and it cost him but a Word of his mouth:—"He spake, and it was done."—To adorn, to govern, and preserve it, is the work of his Wisdom and Providence; but to Redeem a world from sin, cost him his Life: But this was an act of Mercy, and Mercy is God's best beloved Attribute, in which therefore he takes most *Pleasure* and Delight. All these were the works of the Son of God: It was he that Made, it was he that Saves, the world: But this his last work (without which the first had been no blessing to us), this work of Salvation, was most pleasing to God, because most happy to us.—And this *prospered* in the hands of Christ; witness the Conversion of so many Kingdoms of the world to the Christian Religion; the bringing so many sinners to the obedience of Faith, and so many Sons to Glory:—For these things, it is said, *He shall be satisfied.*—In his state of Humiliation, he had small Satisfaction; had much Labour, little Rest; much Sorrow, but little Comfort.—But his Exaltation was soon attended with amazing Success, in the many glorious effects we have been recounting.—And what an infinite *Pleasure* must it be to the holy *Jesus*, the tender and most compassionate Lover of Souls, to see this happy *travail of his soul*!—And shall not we labour to increase his joy by making this his *travail* more perfect and effectual, in ourselves and others?

—By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.

To *justify*, in Scripture Phrase, signifies, most commonly, to acquit and absolve from guilt or blame. But with respect to mankind, as Sinners and Criminals convicted before God, it means the Remission of that pe-

nalty

nalty of Death and Damnation we had incurred by Sin.—Now this could not possibly be done without a sufficient and adequate Satisfaction made to God for the violation of his Law. And who could make this Satisfaction and Atonement to divine Justice, but one who was perfectly *Righteous* himself, and without Sin; yea, of a Dignity equal to the Majesty offended, consequently of infinite Worth and Merit?—But this our Lord has done: He hath satisfied; he hath *justified*: Consequently, from hence we necessarily infer the essential Divinity of our blessed Redeemer: If we believe not this, we are still in our Sins, still *unjustified*.—But thanks be to God, we have here his own infallible Word for it, that he, who died for us, was not only *righteous* Himself but that he hath also *justified* Us; and consequently, satisfied for us the infinite Debt of sin.—But this, he is here said to have done, not by his Power, or mere Mercy, but by his *Knowledge*.—How is this?—Methinks, this teaches us not only his Divine Omniscience, that he perfectly knows all Things, and all Men in general; but in particular, that he knows his Sheep^m; all that are vessels of mercy, and come unto God by him: So discerns the thoughts and intents of all Hearts, as to know certainly who are the proper Objects of Mercy, and who not; who are qualified to receive the Benefits of his sufferings and intercessions, and who not.—But this is a property no Created being can possibly be endued withal; therefore no mere Creature whatsoever can be qualified for the Office of Mediator and Advocate for man.—Who so ascribes such an Office to any Saint or Angel, must necessarily ascribe to Them such an attribute of perfect *Knowledge* as Christ hath; and to apply to Them such Knowledge, is either degrading *Christ* to their level, which is downright Blasphemy; or advancing Them to an Equality with Christ, which is formal Idolatry.—Did the Papist consider this, he

^m *John x. 14.*

would see and abhor the indignity he offers to his Saviour, by the superstitious Honours he pays to Saints or Angels.

12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong: because he hath poured out his soul unto death:—*

If we render the *Hebrew*, as it well may be rendered, *I will give him a share*, or possession, *In the many*, it then refers not only to the *Many*, whom, ver. 11. the Redeemer shall *justify*; and the *Many*, whose Sins, it is

said in this verse, he shall *bear*; but exactly agrees with the same phrase our Lord uses in the institution of his last Supper,—“This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for *Many*, &c.” And with the like expression of St. Paul, “By disobedience of one, *many* were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall *many* be made righteous.” So again, “Grace hath abounded unto *many*.” All which shews, that, although Christ paid a sufficient ransom for *all*, yet *all* will not be saved. Howbeit, because he hath paid it, *all* will not die. Of the whole, though *many* perish, yet *many* will escape—[To the above version of the *Hebrew* text agrees also the *Greek*;—*He shall inherit many*.]

He shall divide the spoil with the strong.] This expression, saith Lowth, alludes to the custom of Conquerors, who were wont to divide the spoils of their victory *with* their Officers and Soldiers. But what officers or soldiers had Christ to *divide* with? none: For so it is expressly said of him, and his conquest, “I have trodden the wine-press ALONE, and of the people there was NONE with me.” And again, “I looked, and there was none to help; I wondered there was none to uphold; therefore mine Own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld

ⁿ Rom. v. 19.

^o Ver. 15.

^p Κληρονομήσει πολλούς.

^q Isa. lxiii. 3.

"me."—Doth it not rather mean our Lord's rescuing many souls out of the hands of the evil spirits, when he descended into Hell, and led captivity captive? According to the sense we shall have occasion to touch upon to-morrow; and according to that saying of his (which seems a just interpretation of this passage), where, speaking of his own conquest over *Satan*, *Luke xi. 22.* he saith, "When a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." Where note, the word *divideth* not only corresponds with the Prophet's expression, but plainly intimates taking *Many*, though not *All*, of those *spoils*, for his share and possession: And SOULS we know are the only *spoils* the Devil takes; consequently must be meant by the *Spoils*, which our Lord, on his victory, and *pouring out his own soul unto death*, had to take from, or *divide* with, him and his angels.—And, with respect to Men, Devils are rightly stiled, *the Strong*.

Here are two circumstances foretold of our Lord's Passion, which are very remarkable. The first, that *he was numbred with the transgressors*.—This the Evangelist, in his relation of his Sufferings (*Mark xv. 28.*), expressly cites from this Prophecy.—Now for an innocent person to suffer as a Malefactor, is a great Indignity: The Shame of such a death is often more insupportable than the death itself: Yet, *Jesus Christ* suffered as a Thief, and was contented that a Murderer should be preferred before him.—Thus, whatever Disgrace may befall us, whether from Heaven, or by men, in Life, or in Death, we find in *Jesus* a Pattern and Guide to animate us by his Example, and support us by his Grace.—Secondly, *He made intercession for the*

transgressors. This was most literally and punctually fulfilled in that kind and most charitable Prayer, which he offered up to God as on this day, upon the Cross, and in the very agonies of death, "Fa-
"ther, forgive them, for they know not what they
"do."

† Luke xxiii. 34.





GOOD FRIDAY.

Second Proper Lessons, { M. P. } JOHN, Chap. xviii.
 { E. P. } I PET. Chap. ii.

After reading the above Lessons.

IF from these Scriptures, and all the accounts of our Lord's Passion and Sufferings, which the Church hath this week laid before us, we collect the substance of what we have heard, there seem to result these two considerations, on which we may, with greatest profit, exercise our meditations at this solemn time. *First*, the glorious Pattern which our Lord's *Example* exhibits to us in those admirable Virtues and Graces, which, like the setting Sun, shone forth with a more distinguishing magnitude in this last scene of his life. *Secondly*, if we consider him in the *person* and character of a *Sinner*, which he assumed for our sakes, and in the Sufferings, he endured for our Sins, though perfectly innocent.

As to his *example*; observe we, first, his HUMILITY: This appeared in its full latitude and extent; first, towards God, in that perfect Submission he paid to the divine will and pleasure; secondly, towards Himself; he had a just and right knowledge both of Himself and of God (in which true Humility consists); knowing that he came from God, and went to God; yet, thirdly, performing an act of condescension to his inferiors, in an instance the most extraordinary and surprising,

prising, of washing his own Disciples feet; and that too, not merely to shew his Humility, but for a pious and most useful End; even to teach them and us, how to mortify our Pride; and, in the lowest degrees, and most trying occasions, to reduce to practice the contrary Virtue; to which, of all others, the proud heart of man is naturally most averse.

Secondly, His CHARITY and Benevolence. This appeared, First, In his healing the ear of *Malchus*: He cured his Enemy, and rebuked his own Disciple that gave the wound.—Secondly, In that kind prayer and intercession for his Crucifiers, *Father, forgive them*; also that favourable plea he offered for them—*They know not what they do*.—Thirdly, In that compassionate saying to those who bewailed him (wherein he plainly shewed more concern for them, than for himself), *Weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children*, &c.—Fourthly, In his mild speech to *Judas*, who betrayed him; *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* &c.—Fifthly, His kind, though reprehending Look on *Peter*, who had denied him.—Sixthly, His sweet assurance of mercy and bliss to the penitent Thief, who was suffering with him on the Cross; and, lastly, His silence to the reproach and blasphemy of the other.

Thirdly, His LIBERALITY. He gave Himself:—No greater instance can be produced of a bountiful and generous mind.—The widow is commended for her two Mites, because it was her All. But our Lord not only gave his All, but even Himself, for us. He emptied himself of all his glory; gave all he had, and then his Life. “He made himself poor, that we might become rich.”

Fourthly, His PIETY, and Submission to the Divine Will: *Not my will, saith he, but thine be done*.—’Tis true, he said, *Let this cup pass from me*. But this he said, to let us understand, that the seeking to

avoid sufferings, or offering a petition to God for our Escape or Deliverance from them, is no part of Discontent; no Sin, but a rational request.—And herein he proved the truth and reality of the Human Nature that he was clothed withal; which can no more be brought to choose and like Pain, than not to feel it.—Nevertheless, we elsewhere find, that his transcendent Piety towards God, and invincible love to Man, made him not only choose, but pray for the bitter Cup.—*The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? Again, With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer: And again, I have a baptism to be baptized with (meaning his Passion); and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?*

Fifthly, His MEEKNESS. This appeared in every act of his Life. The strange backwardness and dullness of his Disciples, was a continual trial of his Patience. But how was it tried by the malice of his Enemies in all the shapes of envy and bitterness, both in their words and actions!—This character of a meek and gentle spirit breathes in every line of the Gospel, in every word and work he said or did; but more especially, during the whole time of his bitter Sufferings.—Thus have we taken a view of his illustrious *Example* in these several lights: O may we study to transcribe them (at least some part of them) into our own hearts and lives!

Secondly, If we consider him next in the *person* and character of a *sinner*, which he assumed for our sakes, and for the expiation of our sins; in His sufferings we may read, and assuredly know, what will be our Own doom, if condemned to bear our Own sins.

Was He in an Agony? So shall we be terrified with the dreadful agonies of Conscience, if forsaken of God, and surprized by death in all the horrors of an impenitent state.

Was He Betrayed and Forsaken? So shall We:—Betrayed to ruin by our bosom Friends, the treacherous kisses of the world; and deserted of all:—

Appre-

Apprehended by death, and haled away by accursed Fiends before the dreadful Tribunal of God, as He was seized and dragged by the merciless soldiers, before the judgment-seat of *Pilate*.—Was he Denied? was he Silent and Dumb?—So shall we; helpless and alone: None will own us then; nor shall we have a word to say in our own defence.

His guilt shall strike the wicked dumb,

Before his Judge's face.

Ps. i. N. V.

Was he accused of treason against *Cæsar*?—So shall we, of Rebellion against the Majesty of Heaven; setting up ourselves, as every Sinner doth, against his lawful Sovereign; so making himself a King.—Was he given up to the insolence of the soldiers for the whole night preceding his passion?—So shall we be delivered to the Tormentors, until the morning come, the fearful judgment-day, to be mocked, insulted, and derided by Devils, till, at the Resurrection, we shall appear before him, to whom the Father hath committed all judgment, as *Cæsar* had to *Pilate*; there to be condemned, and numbered with the transgressors; there to be led away by the officers of divine justice; with a, “Go, ye cursed, into everlasting burnings.”

In that day nothing shall be concealed; therefore His Body was stripped of his vesture, and made naked and bare.—Honours will then torment; therefore he wore a crown of Thorns.—Our Effeminacy and Tenderness will then be given up to Scourges; our souls, to sorrows; every part of the body to agony and pain; our Intemperance to eternal Hunger and Thirst; instead of Dainties, Gall; and vinegar, for luxurious Liquors: Our Eyes to be for ever shocked with ghastly sights; our Ears with bitter reproaches; our Tongue cleaving to the roof of our mouth; every sense, and every member, given up to its proper tormentor; the Hands, that were full of injustice and violence, shall eternally be condemned to the Cross, which

which in life they refused to take up; the Feet, that were swift to mischief, shall for ever be fixed to the Cross, which they used so nimbly to fly from; and the wretched Heart pierced through with horror, and deadly sorrows.

The Treachery and Covetousness of *Judas*, the Malice, Envy, Revenge, and Fury, of the Scribes and Elders, the tergiversation of the Multitude, the pride of *Herod* and his men of war, the barbarity and mockery of the Soldiers, the perfidy and inconstancy of the disciples, the cowardice of *Pilate*, his injustice, and the slight regard he paid to truth, shall, if we be set to answer for Ourselves at the dread tribunal of divine justice, be all found to be Our crimes, and sink us down to everlasting perdition.

But if we die in peace with God, although such crimes may have brought us to the sentence of Death, as they did our blessed Lord, who suffered for them; yet shall they not be imputed to us, no more than theirs were to him, for destruction, or final reprobation.—Our Sins shall be destroyed, but we shall escape.





E A S T E R - E V E N .

P R O P E R L E S S O N S .

The First	} for M. Pr.	{	Zechariah, Chap. ix.
Second			Luke, Ch. xxiii. to Ver. 50.
The First	} for Ev. Pr.	{	Exodus, Chap. xiii.
Second			Hebrews, Chap. iv.

P R E F A C E .

THAT part of Christ's Sufferings, which the Church commemorates this Day, is his Descent into hell.

This, indeed, is one of the Articles of our Creed, which we all promised to believe; yet, being the darkest scene of our Lord's Passion, no wonder the Scriptures also, which are chosen for our meditation on this occasion, should appear somewhat dark and obscure. But, as a pious and learned Expositor^a observes, "This Article of our Lord's Descent into Hell, owes its obscurity more to the various fancies, whereby men have drawn a veil over it, and eclipsed the Light, than to any want of Clearness and Certainty in the Article itself."

Our safest and surest way, therefore, is to adhere to the judgment of our own Church, and to follow those Guides, whose Expositions are most consonant to her determination. —What her opinion is, must appear very plain to any that attend to her book of Articles; and to the several Scriptures she hath selected for this Day's instruction:

^a Bishop Beveridge on the Third of our Thirty-nine Articles.

Consequently,

Consequently, that there is no reason to think, with some^b, that any "Oversight was committed by the Revisers of her Liturgy, in that they did not alter the Epistle for this Day." We ought rather to ascribe it to the Wisdom and Piety of those Revisers, as well as to the singular Providence of God, that they made NO Alteration at all herein; and that, not only, as one coldly alledges, "Because part of the Epistle is suitable to the occasion, as it excites us to imitate the example of Christ's Patience;" but rather, and more particularly, as it expressly asserts the Doctrine, and even the End and Design of his Descent into Hell; which was the very Article of our Faith, which she purposely intended to establish and confirm us in, This day.

And that this was her Intention, is evident, not only from her choice of the said Epistle, but likewise of her Proper Lessons; especially the first for the Morning service [Zech. ix.]; where this Local Descent of Christ, and the glorious effects of it, are so plainly foretold and described by the Prophet. And what can be more reasonable, than to take the Scriptures she hath chosen, on this Occasion, as Proofs of her own Opinion herein, as well as of the Truth of the doctrine?

As to the soundness of her faith in this point, it may be sufficient to produce two of her ablest divines, who have abundantly vindicated and proved the same: One of them (the excellent Bishop Beveridge) hath been cited above: The other^c, after giving the Reasons and Proofs for establishing the truth of this Article, according to the belief and opinion of our first Reformers, concludes with this very remarkable Exposition of it.—"We do profess, according to this interpretation, to believe, That Christ, by his Spirit [or Soul] descended into the Place of Separate Spirits, whether denoting the receptacle of evil or good Spirits, that he might, by a sensible demonstration of his Power, convince the former of their Impiety, and the Justness of their sufferings; and strengthen the

^b Wheatley, &c.

^c Dr. Fiddes.

“ faith of the latter, by declaring the benefits and merits
 “ of his death, in a more express and particular manner,
 “ to them: Or if there were persons in any middle state
 “ between these two, to propose, in virtue of his death,
 “ certain Conditions of grace and pardon to them.”

It is true, ^a some great names, of our own Communion, do strenuously oppose this sense. But it is much safer to err with the Church, even supposing it to be an error, than in Opposition to her.—Nevertheless, that They, and not the Church, are in the error, we may reasonably presume, from the following Considerations.

1. The sense they [the opposers of the Doctrine] take St. Peter's words in, and which they seem to be led into by paying too implicit regard to our English Translation, appears not to be the genuine, or certain Sense, of the place.

—The Original is [θανάτωθεὶς μὲν ἐν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ τῷ πνεύματι] This our Translators have rendered, Put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.

In the first place, it is evident to any one that hath skill in the Greek tongue, that the place is not justly, but very defectively rendered.—The Particle μὲν [which signifies indeed, or truly] is wholly omitted, although of great force, as it stands opposed to the disjunctive δὲ [but] in the last member of the sentence.—The sense also of the Preposition [ἐν] is so varied, as to give a different turn to the Meaning. For tho' it be not set before τῷ πνεύματι, as it is before σαρκί; yet certainly it is implied, because it is placed before the article [ὁ] in the succeeding sentence, which is plainly relative to πνεύματι. Wherefore the rendering, according to the truth of grammatical construction, ought to be, Put to death, INDEED, in the flesh, but quickened IN the spirit; in which [ἐν ᾧ] he went, and preached to the spirits ALSO in prison: For so the rendering ought to be; not, BY which also, as our present version hath it; as if [also] referred to

^a Bishop Pearson, and Dr. Hammond.

the Spirit (by which he preached; to wit, the Holy Ghost); whereas it plainly, in the Original, refers to the spirits in prison, whom he preached unto, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τοῖς ἐν φυλακῇ πνεύμασι, &c. i. e. to Them Also; to Them as well as unto Us.—This unwarrantable liberty of changing the meaning and construction of these Particles, and leaving out others, has quite obscured, if not marred the sense: Whereas, the most literal translation must ever be the truest, where there appears no manner of Impropriety to oblige us to recede from it.—The Syriac translation (which Bishop Beveridge commends as the best, as well as antientest of any) renders it, Mortuus est in corpore, sed vixit in spiritu; i. e. “He died in body, but lived “in spirit;” i. e. his Soul continued Alive, or survived the Body.

So then it was Christ’s Human Spirit, or Soul, and not the Holy Ghost, which is here meant by the Apostle: And In This his Human Spirit (as the Apostle proceeds) he went and preached to the Spirits in prison; even in that Spirit or Soul, which, at his expiring on the Cross, he commended into the hands of his Father.

This then seems to solve the whole difficulty, and to clear the sense of this Passage; and thereby do justice to the Doctrine of our Church, as well as the truth of God’s Word: So that the elaborate and uncouth Exposition, which some commentators, who argue against Christ’s local descent, have given us of this text, might well have been spared.

2. The translation being thus cleared up, it appears sufficiently plain, from the words, That Christ, in his Human Spirit or Soul, did Descend into hell, and preach to the spirits there. But this will appear still more clear and plain, if we consider the whole Context.—The Apostle had mentioned his Dying, ver. 18. and likewise the End for which he died; to wit, for our sins; that so he might bring Us to God.—From this mention of his Death, he takes occasion, very properly, and in order to obviate an Objection that might arise concerning the state he was in, after such Death; and what was become of his Soul while
his

his Body lay in the grave:—*Why, in Answer, as it were, to this, he tells us, That even then his surviving Part, or Soul, was employed in carrying on the same great design of Redemption; namely, by preaching the Gospel to them also who were Dead (and, at that time, in the prison of "Adns, or the invisible state) as he had to Us; that is, as he had done before to the Living; that so he might bring THEM also to God.—And, doubtless, he brought Many, according to that saying, "He led captivity captive;" i. e. he triumphed over the powers of Hell, led away all that believed and obeyed his Preaching. These Prisoners of Hope, as our Lesson calls them^c, he carried with him to Heaven; and afterwards gave Gifts unto men; that is, he gave his Holy Spirit to such as were yet in the flesh,—to fit and prepare them for heaven.*

3. *As this Doctrine is no way repugnant to Reason or Scripture, nor inconsistent with any one Attribute of God; so we may farther say, That what the Apostle here affirms, concerning the Soul of Christ, after its departure from the Body, its living, acting, carrying on the great ends of his Mission, is a strong and irrefragable Proof, that the Soul of Man is immortal; that it neither dies with the body, nor sleeps in the grave, until the Resurrection, as some have imagined; but is rather more Alive than ever (provided it depart in Peace with God), more vigorous, more perfect, than ever; which sense is favoured and strongly implied in the word [Ζωοποιήσῃ] quickened, or made alive; as if, in comparison of this new state of Life, it had lain before in a state of Death; as if it had not lived till Then.*

4. *And this suggests another Reason, in support of this Doctrine.—Our Lord, in his Agony, had said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death;" and, on the Cross, just before his departure, had cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Now we know, that the Death of the Soul can only be caused by Sin;*

^c Zech. ix. 12.

and we are told, that the sins of the whole world had been laid upon him; and that, for some time, in his last moments, God had forsaken him; a Question then, or cavil, might be raised, "What became of the Soul of Christ, when he died? Although in its own nature immortal, as all human Souls are, was it not lost, and spiritually dead? You say, it descended into Hell; did it not suffer the Pains of the damned there?"—These Objections the Apostle obviates, by affirming, That although Christ's Soul, in his Agony, was, by his own Confession, overwhelmed with sorrow even to Death; and although it was also true, that God on the Cross had forsaken him, so that, for a time, he was in a state of spiritual death and destitution (free among the Dead; cut away from God's band;—his life smitten down to the ground, as David the type, and in the person of Christ, complains^f); yet upon the Soul's departure from the body, and our Lord's commending of it into the hands of his heavenly Father, she was quickened; and might with great propriety, at least comparatively speaking, be said to be made Alive [*ζωοποιήσθαι*]; was recovered, and, as it were, Revived from death. And it was a justice due to the holy and immaculate Soul of Jesus, as well as to his Character, that the Scripture, which had recorded his spiritual Deliquium, and extreme Agony of Soul, should also assert and attest his Restoration to the spiritual Life, which for a time had been suspended.—And no man could be more fit to publish and attest this truth, than St. Peter, who had been Witness of his Master's conflict with the hour and powers of Darknes in the Garden of Sorrow, and on the Cross.—This may likewise help us more clearly to understand what the Prophet (Isa. liii. 10, 12.) saith of the Soul of the Messiah, "That his SOUL was made an Offering for sin; That he poured out his Soul unto Death:"—And then, as it follows, "He divided the spoil with the strong;" i. e. rescued his captives, and the Prisoners of Hope.

^f Psalm lxxxviii.

5. Again; this kind of Revival, and Perception of new Life and Power, which the Soul of Christ was endued with, after its departure from the Body, intimates to us the Improvement which our Souls also shall receive when they leave this earthly Tabernacle, this tenement of Clay. Then only may she be said to Live, when she has put off this heavy incumbrance of Flesh and Blood.

To conclude; though many more things might be said on this extraordinary subject, we shall only mention one more, which seems of great importance, and of no small weight to confirm the Truth of what has been advanced.—Every good man's Soul, when it departs into the world of Spirits, may very truly be said, to Preach unto the spirits in prison; that is, to the wicked dead, who are reserved in chains under darkness (i. e. in the invisible state) against the great day. They convince them of their egregious folly and sin in having rejected the tenders of Grace; they magnify the mercy and wisdom of God in the great and glorious work of man's Redemption; they give the most evident proof and demonstration of it in their own happiness and salvation.—At the same time they manifest forth the glory of Christ, the efficacy and power of Faith in a Crucified Saviour; the truth and excellency of the Gospel; and the apparent Possibility of that Holiness of life, and purity of morals, which it requires of all the followers of Jesus, and was exemplified in their practice.





E A S T E R - E V E N.

First Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer:

Z E C H A R I A H, Chap. ix.

A R G U M E N T.

Zechariah prophesied after the Return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon: And the scene of this particular Prophecy seems to take in the whole period, which was to intervene from his own time, until the coming of Christ; and the first successes of the Gospel; to wit, for the space of Five hundred years. And his chief view (as of all the other Prophets) being directed to that great Event, he gives this Prophecy the title of The burden of the Word of the LORD; that is, of Christ; the subject of it being a kind of prophetic History of the victories, and triumphant successes, of the Messiah over all the enemies of his Church.—He begins with the conquest of Hadrach and Damascus, of Hamath, and Tyre and Sidon, &c.; that is, of the several Heathen Nations, which were conterminous to the land of Israel. These the Messiah first subdued by the arms of Alexander, and afterwards by the Romans. And these conquests over the professed Temporal Enemies of his people, were not only types of the victory that should be obtained, by the power of the Gospel, over the spiritual Adversaries of his Church, but the necessary prelude and

preparative thereto. For what were all the conquests of Alexander, and others, which extended the Grecian and Roman Empire over almost the whole habitable world, within that compass of time which this Prophecy takes in, but the battles of the Messiah, in order to make way for the more easy and effectual Propagation of his Gospel; when all the petty contending states should be reduced under the power and dominion of one supreme imperial head?

Then, the prophetic Historical proceeds to describe the triumphant Entry of this Divine Conqueror into his own capital City Jerusalem.—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee, &c. ver. 9.

Next, he foretels his universal Dominion over the World, even from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth:

Yea, that Hell itself shall be subdued, and compelled to submit to this Almighty Conqueror; to open her prison-doors, and surrender her captives.—And this conquest of Hell is the victory, which the Church This Day professedly celebrates.

Lastly, He describes the triumphs of the Cross over the Gentile world, and the swift and irresistible progress of Christianity over all the earth; concluding with the happy effects, and gracious advantages, of the Gospel.

E A S T E R - E V E N.

First Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

Z E C H A R I A H, Chap. ix.

1. **T**HE burden of the Word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: when the eyes of **T**HIS is a prediction of what the Messiah, whose Name is The Word of GOD (Rev. xix. 13.), was to do and suffer, in order

man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD.

2. And Hamath also shall border thereby; Tyrus and Zidon, though it be very wise.

3. And Tyrus did build herself a strong-hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.

4. Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will finite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire.

5. Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza also shall see it, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron: for her expectation shall be ashamed, and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

6. And a bastard^a shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

7. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth: but he that remaineth, even he shall be for our God, and he shall be as a governor in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite.

der to set up his spiritual Kingdom upon earth.—

About this time (when this prophecy was delivered) the eyes of man, even the wise men among the Gentiles, by the light of natural Reason, as well as the Tribes of Israel, by the light of Revelation and Prophecy, began to be turned towards the Lord, and to expect the mighty Redeemer of the world. For “He was the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remained in the broad sea.”—P/. lxxv.

To prepare, and make way, for his coming, this burden shall first be laid on the several nations which are near to, and round about, Judea, particularly^b Syria, and its metropolis Hadrach (or Damascus); the cities of Hamath (or Antioch), of^c Tyre and^d Zidon, notwithstanding their wisdom and strength. — Neither policy nor wealth, their situation or walls, shall defend them from the power and dominion of the Greek and Roman forces, which the LORD shall lead against them.—Little indeed did those mighty heroes, the *Alexanders* and

^{a b c d} See note at the end.

Cæsars, think, that they fought not for Themselves, but for the Lord *Christ*; that they were employed by Him to prepare his way, to make his paths strait, as pioneers and forerunners of his coming.—For what are the greatest Kings, but his vassals? He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords:—And what are all the great events of war and peace that happen in the world, but the determination of his Wisdom and Providence; for his own glory, and the good of his Church?—And happy, thrice happy, the people who are conquered by him!—The wars of the LORD have ever been for the Good of mankind:—The conquerors, and mighty Potentates of the earth, fight for vain-glory, and with a purpose to enslave; but the *Lord Christ* fights only that he may Save, and set the captive free.—Was *Tyre* cast out of her stronghold, and her power in the sea smitten, and her houses devoured with fire; yea, devoured with Fire, although surrounded by the Sea?—This was the method, and these the wholesome means, to fit her for the reception of his Gospel.—Did *Askelon* see this, and fear? Did *Gaza* see it, and was very sorrowful? This Fear made way for Hope; this Sorrow for Joy unspeakable, and full of glory.—Is *Ekron* defeated of her expectation, and ashamed?—She had been undone, had she not been disappointed; she had been confounded for ever, had she not been so ashamed. Happy *Gaza*, to change her own king for the King of *Israel*! Happy *Askelon*, to change her former inhabitants for a blessed race of Christians! Happy *Palestine*, to have her *Pride* cut off,—by Humility; her Envy,—by Benevolence and Love! for after she is purged of the blood out of her mouth, which is the most delicious food of Envy and Revenge; and from all her abominations from between her teeth; he that remaineth shall be for our God; i. e. shall become an happy Disciple of the blessed *Jesus*; shall be made a free Denizen of the heavenly *Jerusalem*; and intitled to all the glorious privileges of his Church; yea, be qualified for the highest offices therein, even

as a governor in Judah, *i. e.* be admitted into the sacred Orders of the Church; and Ekron as a Jebusite, *i. e.* be received as a native inhabitant of the Holy City.

8. *And I will encamp about mine house, because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth; and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.*

The Church of the living God, which is his *house* and family, shall now be extended to other nations; and he will continually *encamp about* it, to defend and secure it from every enemy, and every *oppressor*, both spiritual and temporal; for “this is the city of the great king; “God is well known in her palaces as a sure refuge. “So that the kings of the earth, when they are gathered together against her, shall go by together [without prevailing against her]; they shall marvel to see such things, they shall be astonished, and suddenly cast down: Fear shall come there upon them” [even, upon all that attempt her destruction]; “fear and sorrow, as upon a woman in travail.” *Pf. xlviii^d.*

9. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

But as for his own people; if the *Jews*, when he made his Entry into *Jerusalem*, meek, and riding upon an ass, to suffer there for the sins of the world, received him with loud hosannahs (as is here foretold they would); with how much greater joy, and spiritual exultation, should the Christian Church, the true daughter of *Sion*, the genuine daughter of *Jerusalem*, attend his triumph at this time, over sin and Satan, death and hell!—This his Kingdom and Conquest cometh not indeed with Observation, *i. e.* with outward

^d See note at the end.

Pomp and ostentation : It is visible only to the eye of Faith.—Justice and righteousness is the only entrance into it: *Salvation* the happy fruits of his victory : Lowliness and Meekness the sure mark and character of his Power. These are the Regalia and royal Ensigns of His Empire and Dominion ; and these must unite in every pious soul ; in every true subject of *Jesus Christ*.

10. *And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth*.*

After the visible and temporal conquests of Christ over the Gentile world by the arms of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, which were to make way for his spiritual empire ; the inspired Historian goes on to foreshew by what *Methods* he will extend his spiritual acquisitions ;—to wit, not by worldly arms, but by Grace.—And to prevent

any secular views, and carnal prospects, in the *Jews*, who expected only a Temporal *Messiah*, he declares here by his Prophet, that he will quite disarm that people, and take away all military power from them ; as we know it afterwards happened :—*I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim* [the most warlike of all the Tribes, and head of the kingdom of *Israel*] ; *and the horse from Jerusalem* [the metropolis of the kingdom of *Judah*] *and the battle-bow shall be cut off*.—Strange and unheard of way to Conquest !—dismounting and disarming his own people, that they may be the better able to overcome ! But the wonder ceases, when we consider, that our true and only Enemies are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil ; our own corrupt Appetites and Passions. These spiritual enemies, these enemies of our Souls, are to be manfully fought against by all that are enlisted under Christ's banner ; but not with the arms of Flesh : “ Our warfare is not carnal,

* See note on this verse at the end.

“but spiritual;” and must be waged with the spiritual weapons of Faith and Patience. “This is the victory” that overcometh the world, even our faith^f.——But *Jews*, and all carnal-minded men, look on the Heathen, *i. e.* all that differ from them in some worldly respects, of party, interest, or principle, to be their enemies. These they are for subduing and destroying; yea, call for fire from Heaven upon them.—But what faith our heavenly Leader? *I will speak PEACE unto the heathen*; that is, the Gospel of Peace, and the glad tidings of Salvation; this will I preach unto them.—This was the Method, these the Weapons, by which our Lord and Saviour triumphed over the Gentile world, and, by degrees, subdued the whole earth, extending his dominion *from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth*.—And although we do not yet see this completely come to pass; for we are yet engaged in a state of War; this will assuredly be the final success of the Cross of Christ.

Here God the Father speaks to his Son, and promises him a victory over HELL also; and as this was here foretold in the Prophet, so was it fulfilled, as on this Day, on our Lord’s Descent into that state of departed spirits.—Other Scriptures declare his Descent thither; this asserts the Success and victorious Effects of his descent. Our Epistle for this day affirms, that his Spirit (or Soul) went and preached to those, who were held in that Prison; our Lesson assures us, that *by the blood of his covenant, i. e.* in virtue, and through the Merits, of his sacred Death and Passion, God would send forth his prisoners *out of that pit*, whom he therefore calls

11. *As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water.*

12. *Turn ye to the Stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare, that I will render double unto thee:*

^f 1 John v. 4.

the *Prisoners of Hope*.—This then we may, and ought to, believe as a matter of Fact, not in a figurative only, but a real and literal sense; though incomprehensible as to the Manner, as all other articles of Faith and Mysteries are.—And seeing it no way interferes with other truths of Religion; nor is contrary to, but rather favoured by, the tenour of Holy Scripture; it appears more than probable, that in this region of Spirits were contained vessels of mercy, who are therefore stiled *Prisoners of HOPE*, as well as Vessels fitted for Destruction, *i. e.* without Hope.

Among the Heathen were men of eminent virtue, and excellent morals: When they died, shall we say, with some over-rigid Christians, that they were damned, and lost to all eternity?—Shall we call their brightest virtues, but *splendida peccata*^g, real Sins, and only varnished over with a vain and empty shew?—Shall we think, that all those, who, in search of Wisdom, forsook and despised the Honours, the Pleasures, the Riches, of the world; and embraced a frugal, temperate, and upright life; had no Reward of their labours, no recompence of their Virtues?—or, which sounds still more harsh, shall we say, they were punished and tormented everlastingly?—Can we think this, without casting at the same time, an imputation on the goodness and justice of God?—Yet, what shall we say? The Scriptures have expressly declared, that, “without Faith, it is impossible to please God^h.” That “the just (*i. e.* the most righteous man that is) shall live by FAITHⁱ (*i. e.* by his Faith, not by his Justice only);” and again, “By grace are ye saved through FAITH^k.”—What hope then for Heathens, and those who never believed in Christ?

This Difficulty methinks is solved by this Day's service in our Lesson, and in the Epistle; and a saving is left for the Truth of God's Word, without

^g As *Augustine* files them. ^h *Heb.* xi. 6. ⁱ *Heb.* ii. 4. and *Rom.* i. 17. ^k *Eph.* ii. 5.

derogating from his Goodness.—We grant, that no man ever was, nor ever can be, saved, without Faith in Christ; but this the Gentiles, before his Coming, could not have. They had no Opportunity of coming to him by the hearing of Faith, before he came himself to *preach* it to them; consequently, they did not (as is testified of others) Die in Faith.—But then, this was not their Crime, but their Unhappiness: And therefore the Saviour, we may justly presume, in the overflowings of his Goodness, went to Them, who could not come to Him; and, after he had finished his ministry upon earth, he went and preached the Gospel to THEM *also*; for if, as the Apostle affirms of him, He preached to the spirits in prison, *who sometime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah*; that is, to the Souls of men in the antediluvian world; it can with no reason be supposed, but that he did the same to the spirits of all the Heathen people, who had since that time departed this life, without the faith or knowledge of Christ.—To confirm this the more, the same Apostle speaks in plainer and more comprehensive terms, in the next chapter, ver. 6.; That “the Gospel was preached to Them that were Dead;” and the Cause why it was so, is there expressly assigned, “That they might be judged according to men in the flesh” [that is, judged as we, who now live in the flesh, shall be at the last day], “but live according to God in the spirit,” *i. e.* have the spiritual life in their Souls, now that they live no longer in the Body; now that they have lost the natural life of vegetation and sense, and with it all Opportunity of Hearing the Gospel with their bodily ears.—Now, as there is but one Gospel, we may not doubt, but that which was preached by our Lord, when he descended amongst them, was the very same he had preached to the Living; namely, the offer of Salvation on the condition of Faith in Him.—Whoever closed with these terms, as doubtless all well-meaning persons did, whose ignorance

rance had been their only fault, were certainly received to Mercy, and carried away from their *Prison* to the *strong-hold*; that is, they were delivered, and ascended with Christ from thence to Paradise: While those, who in life had been profligate and wicked, and, perhaps, so perverse, as, like the Jewish Rulers and Pharisees, rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and despised the Offers of grace and salvation, they were left in durance to be reserved to the judgment of the great day.

Thus then our Lord, according to our Yesterday's Lesson, "divided the spoil with the strong¹;" thus he "led captivity captive;" thus, as it is said of *Pharaoh's* two prisoners, the baker and the butler, he restored the one, and hanged the other; thus, as *Isaiah* speaks, "he proclaimed liberty to the captives, and "the opening of the prison to them that were bound:" Thus, our *David* brought back his captivated *Ziglagites*; he lost not one of his own people, but of the enemy he left not one alive^m; he took all their treasures and spoils; but sent Gifts to all his Friends, and then Ascended his Throne.—How wonderful a parallel is this! how minutely and particularly are our Lord's Descent and Conquest over the powers of Hell, his Resurrection and Ascension, his Mission of the Holy Ghost, and giving Gifts unto men, pictured to us in that memorable passage of the life of *David*! And who can think of these things without an holy astonishment at the wisdom and goodness of God; and the much more extended bounds of the Redemption of mankind by Christ, than our narrow hearts are wont or apt to conceive or comprehend?—By this additional conquest of Hell, as well as Earth, Christ hath, as was promised, *Double rendered* unto him.—And, upon this glorious reflection, fit it is, that we should render unto him *double Honour and Praise, a double Tribute of Service and Love.*

¹ *Isa.* liii.

^m See 1 *Sam.* ch. xxx.

13. *When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man :*

In the foregoing remarks, we have observed, that, by the Double there promised to be rendered to *Christ* for his Sufferings, was meant the conquest of Earth and Hell, Two worlds for one ; Two worlds more annexed

to his Empire, in compensation for his leaving his own Heaven for the sake of man, and emptying himself of the glory he had with the Father before the world was. And these new acquisitions the prophetic Historian describes according to the Order of Time : First, he relates the *Messiah's* triumph over Hell, and the release of his captives, or *prisoners of hope*, from those infernal regions ; then he proceeds to his Conquest of this our world. An account of this we have in the verse before us, and in the sequel of our Lesson. In the first place, he mentions his Army ; then, his Weapons.—His army are *the sons of Zion* : That this was so, appears from the acts of the Evangelical History : The first Preachers of the Gospel, who were commanded to go into all the world, were *Sons of Zion* ; not only *Israelites* by Nature, but by Grace ; true *sons of the true Zion*. Of these was the first Army of the *Messiah*, for subduing the whole world to his obedience, composed ; according to that of *Isaiah*, “ Out of *Zion* shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from *Jerusalem* ” ; and that saying of the Psalmist °, “ The Lord gave the word, great was “ the ^p Army of those that published it.”

By the *sons of Greece*, against whom this Army was to be raised and sent, is to be understood the whole Gentile world. Of the then known world *Greece* was the most eminent part, both for Arms and Learning ; so might well be put for the whole ; especially if we advert to the original Name *Javan*, by which the Pro-

^a Ch. ii. 3.

° Ps. lxxviii.

^p So the Hebrew.

phet calls it; for *Javan* bears a much more extensive sense, as it takes in not only the *Ionians*, or people of *Asia Minor* (who were the immediate Descendants of *Javan*); and likewise the *Grecians* properly so called, who were descended from them; but the other *European* nations also, particularly the *Romans*, who acknowledged their descent from the *Grecians*; and, in the time of Christ, were lords of the world.—Nevertheless, the *Greeks* retained still the pre-eminence in point of Learning, and in all Arts and Sciences, in so much that even the *Romans* sent their Children to *Greece* for education. The rest of the world therefore, as Pupils and Disciples of *Greece*, might properly be styled her *Sons*.—And as the *Greek* Tongue was then the most common and universal, it pleased the wisdom of God to dictate all the Books of the New Testament in that Language, which, in a manner, was the Mother-tongue of the Gentile world.

The next things, we are to observe in this warlike preparation, are the Weapons which this army is to be equipped with. And we are told but of One bow, One arrow, One sword.—*Judab* is the Bow, *Ephraim* the Arrow, and *Zion* the Sword: And of One mighty Man to wield and use these Weapons; but this mighty man is the LORD. *When I have bent Judab for me, and filled the bow with Ephraim, &c.* From hence we may learn (as before on ver. 10.); First, That Christianity was never designed to be propagated by force of Worldly Arms; but in a manner quite the reverse to all other military operations. The *Chariot* and *Horse*, and *Battle-bow*, were to be cut off: All such warlike equipments, as other commanders made use of, were to be laid aside; and, instead thereof, *Judab* is the bow, *Ephraim* the shaft, and *Zion* his sword. As the Church is said to be built of Living Stones, so her Weapons, to conquer or defend, are Living Weapons.—And as *Judab* was the Royal tribe, and the tribe whence our Lord sprung, it may fitly denote these two things; First, That Power and Authority, with

with which Christ has invested his Church, to send forth ministers to preach, and to reduce men to the obedience of faith. *Secondly*, That the ministers of the New law were not necessarily to be of the tribe of *Levi*, but indifferently of any tribe; therefore *Ephraim* (which, as head of the kingdom of *Israel*, does often signify the whole Ten tribes) may here represent the Christian Priesthood or Clergy, which were like polished shafts in the hand of the Lord; and to be shot, as it were, out of the Bow of *Judah*, when that Bow was bent by Christ for himself;—swift as arrows out of a bow, to execute his commands; sure, and always flying to the mark.

In the next place, by the *Bow*, the *Arrow*, the *Sword*, being but ONE, we are taught the Unity of the Church, of her Orders, and her Doctrines; as well as the unity of her Head, the Holy One, our Lord JESUS CHRIST: So that all centers in One:—All must constitute One Body, and have One Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.

The swift and extraordinary Progress of the Gospel, by Instruments seemingly so unequal to such a work, shall convince the world, that it is the Lord's doing; that it is his hand which bringeth such mighty things to pass; that the LORD

14. *And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south.*

fighteth for *Israel*, as the *Egyptians* confessed of old.—This Evidence of divine power, which St. *Paul* rightly calls the Demonstration of the Spirit, was what convinced and converted the Heathen world.—Our modern Infidels indeed are proof against all such evidence; not because they cannot see, but because they will not. But, as *Isaiab* speaks to a like sort of persons, “They shall see, and be confounded.” For

^a *Adonai Jehewib.*

^b Chap. xxvi.

the Lord, who is said to *blow the trumpet*, and calls all men by the sound of the Gospel, shall at last come *with whirlwinds of the south*, to scatter and destroy by his irresistible Power all those who reject and despise his Mercy.

15. *The LORD of hosts shall defend them, and they shall devour, and subdue with sling-stones, and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.*

Here the Victory and Triumph of Christ are described.

—The *Lord of hosts*, that is, the Lord of heaven and earth, who hath all nature under his command, shall defend his faithful servants and soldiers, who fight under his banner. They therefore cannot miscarry; not one of them shall be destroyed, or

fail of success; for this LORD of Hosts is the Lord JESUS CHRIST, to whom All Power is given in Heaven and Earth. He is the Captain of our Salvation; he is our Almighty leader and defender.

Eating up and devouring expresses the speedy, as well as total Conquest of the enemy. Of such enemies it is said by the Psalmist, “They eat up my people as it were bread:” But here it is said of his People, they shall *eat up and devour*, i. e. utterly subdue and destroy their Enemies.—The success of this war shall finally and completely terminate in their favour.—*With Sling-stones*: This may probably allude to the conquest of *David* over the giant *Goliath*, and so contain the mystical meaning, as well as allude to the supernatural success of that battle.—The Victory is also described as a Feast or Festival, where it is usual for men to rejoice with singing and shouting. In like manner our spiritual Victory over the world, and the success of the Gospel, yea, our very warfare, shall be attended with great cheerfulness and joy, in chanting forth the praises of God.—*Filled like bowls*, that is, they shall be filled with the Spirit, as bowls are with

Wine.

Wine. This to the soul of the truly pious man is Joy shed abroad in the Heart; but to the ignorant world seems Madness and Enthusiasm. So the *Jews* thought the Apostles, when filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, to be drunk, and full of new wine.

As corners of the altar.] This is added to signify, that the Victory is not to be obtained without Blood. —Our Lord's Garments are said, in the combat, to be sprinkled with Blood*: For so his Flesh, which is but the Garment of the soul, was, as the horns or *corners of the altar*, stained with his own Blood; and so have the Garments of myriads of his followers, who have resisted unto blood, and laid down their lives for his sake.

16. *And the LORD their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people; for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.*

But He, whom *Thomas* called My Lord and my God, he whom all true Christians believe in as *the LORD their God*, shall save them in THAT DAY, even in the day of Death: They shall not perish, but have everlasting Life. — “The righteous

“man hath Hope (yea, not only Hope, but sure “Victory, and even Life) in his Death.” — He that loseth his life in this war, shall find it. — Moreover, he that is the LORD their God, is likewise their Shepherd; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. His people he shall save and preserve as a shepherd his *flock*: So save, as not to lose one.” — Yea, they shall be exalted to Honour, and shine as the precious *stones of a Crown*. — “Ye are “my crown of rejoicing,” said an Apostle to his beloved converts”. — In this life the Saints are Crowns to their faithful Pastors; when removed to a better,

* *Is.* lxiii. 3. † *Prov.* xiv. 32. † *John* xvii. 12. *Ch.* xviii. 9.
 † *1 Thess.* ii. 19.

they are set as brilliant gems to embellish the Crown of their glorified Redeemer *.—Nay, as Living stones, they *lift up themselves* (for so the *Hebrew* expresses it) by a spiritual inherent vitality to that crown of Glory, as to their proper centre of Rest, and endless Felicity. They are drawn by an attractive force to that immortal Crown, which incircles the head of our Lord's sacred Humanity, and constitutes the eternal joy and bliss, and splendor, of Heaven itself.

This shall be the victorious issue of our Christian Warfare; thus shall it be done to those, whom this King delighteth to honour.—They that suffer with him here shall reign with him for ever, and set up their trophy and monument of victory, eternal in the Heavens.

17. *For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! corn shall make the young men chearful, and new wine the maids.*

After so glorious a vision of mercy and glory, benefits and blessings, in the œconomy of man's redemption, well may the prophet cry out in a pious rapture, and holy astonishment, *How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!*—Goodness unspeakable to fallen sinful man! Goodness conducted by almighty power, and beautified in the whole display thereof by infinite wisdom, holiness, and truth!—Holiness and truth with respect to his own glory; and with regard to man, such a torrent of Comforts, such abundant joy, and sincere happiness, as, like *corn, shall make the young men chearful, and, as new wine, the maids.* In which words we have also no obscure intimation of the elements in the sacrament of the holy *Eucharist*, as well as of their blessed effects; even, the strengthening, refreshing, and exhilarating, of the soul in the Lord's Supper, as our bodies are by the BREAD and WINE.

* 1 Pet. ii. 5.

^a, Ver. 6. *A bastard shall dwell in Ashdod.*] A bastard or stranger. Some understand hereby, *Alexander*, who, as *Arian* writes, placed a garrison in *Ashdod* after he had taken *Tyre*.—He was also counted a *bastard*: And he himself seemed to glory in it, by affecting to be called the Son of *Jupiter Ammon*.

^{b, c, d, &c.} Wonderful and most exact was the completion of this Prophecy in every Event foretold concerning the Cities here mentioned; as may be seen in History, particularly *Dr. Prideaux's Connexion*, vol. I. an. 333.; and 332. where he relates the Conquests of *Alexander*, his taking *Damascus*, *Tyre*, &c. but his sparing *Jerusalem*, notwithstanding his coming with full intent to have destroyed it, at the malicious instigation of the *Samaritans*. The Lord, who here (ver. 8.) promised to *encamp* about his House, miraculously preserved it, by turning the King's wrath into awe and veneration at the sight of the High-Priest, who came out of the City arrayed in his Pontifical Robes to meet him; even causing him to descend from his chariot, and fall down prostrate at the feet of the High-Priest; and not only to spare the City, but to offer Sacrifices to the GOD of *Israel*, and to grant the *Jews* many great immunities: So that the Prophecy of the Psalmist also was thereby literally fulfilled. *Psalms* xlviii.

^e Ver. 10. *I will cut off the chariot, &c.*] Bishop *Sherlock*, in his discourse on literal Prophecy, insists much on this disarming of the *Jewish* People, as an eminent proof of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, which was not to be propagated by force of Arms.—To which we may add; that this was prefigured by the army of *Gideon*, their earthen pitchers with lights therein, and trumpets of rams horns, by which they discomfited the enemy.

Ver. 16 *Lifted up as an ensign upon his land*]: So our *English* translation: and most other versions agree herewith: But the literal rendering of the *Hebrew* (which is generally the best) is *elevantes se super humum ejus, lifting up themselves, &c.*; and agrees in syntax with *stones*; by which expression a personal action is ascribed to such *stones*. I hope, therefore, the sense I have given it in the Paraphrase, of *living* Stones, exerting an act of internal Life, and *lifting up* Themselves, will not appear too much strained, but most agreeable to the Original, as well as to *St. Peter's* Sentiment, who styles Christians *lively*, or rather *living* Stones (*λίθοι ζῶντα*); i. e. such as have a principle of Life and Motion in Themselves, even such as, in the verse preceding, are said to *come* to the Foundation; and by the Apostle are bidden to *build up Themselves* (*οἰκοδομηθῆτε, ædificemini*, as *Tremellius* renders it, and exactly agreeable to this passage in our prophet, *lifting up themselves*); so that we may suppose them to be parallel places; and that the Apostle had an eye to the Prophet.

The other liberty I have taken of rendering the *Hebrew* [*Adhama*] by *humanity*, instead of *land*, as other Interpreters have done, may seem more extraordinary; but as the Original [*Adhama*] is plainly the Appellative of [*Adham* man], as *Humanitas* is of *Homo*,

the violence done to the Original is little or nothing, how contrary soever it may appear to the common and received Versions.—Nor is it foreign to the sense and meaning of the Text; for, supposing the word *Land* is to be retained, it most probably means the Human nature of Christ, and so corresponds with that passage in the lxxviii *Psalms*, which I humbly conceive is a parallel thereto, “The EARTH shall yield her increase.” And I am not a little pleased to find, that I am not singular herein, many of the Fathers (as *Sacy* informs us on that *Psalms*) expounding it in this Sense. And his words are very remarkable; “Il est plus digne de la sainte elevation du prophete qui parle ici, d’entendre avec le saints peres, & avec les interprets, par ce fruit que la Terre a donné, Jesus Christ même, qui selon son Humanité, a esté un fruit de la Terre, étant le Fils d’une Vierge, mais un fruit vraiment élevé & glorieux.”—He refers us to *Augustine*, *Hilary*, *Theodoret*, *Bellarmin*, *Genebrard*; to whom we may also add *St. Jerom*.

Additional note, from *Sacy*, on ver. 11.

“ Ces parolles s’entendent visiblement de la descente de Jesus Christ dans les enfers, lorsque qu’ayant reconcilié les hommes avec Dieu par le merite, & la vertu de son sang, il alla dans les enfers; & le lieu ou estoient retenus depuis le commencement du monde les Patriarches, & les anciens justes, marque ici figurement par le fond d’un lac qui étoit sans eau, & les tirant de cette captivité ou ils estoient depuis tant de siecles, parceque le ciel n’étoit pas encore ouvert, il les emmena avec luy, malgré tous les efforts des demons, pour être comme les trophées de sa victoire, & les compagnons de son triomphe.”





E A S T E R - E V E N.

Second Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

L U K E, Chap. xxiii. Verse 50.

The burial of Christ.

50. *AND* behold, there **I**N the Prophet (*Isaiab* liii. 9.) it was foretold that
 was a man named Christ should "make his
Joseph, a counsellor, and " Grave with the Rich in
 he was a good man, and a " his death." Here we are
just: informed how it came to

pass.—*Joseph of Arimathea*, a rich, but good man, takes care to give our Lord a Grave, and provide for his Funeral: Nay, his Funeral is attended with more Honour than his Life had been.—His Birth had no other accommodation than a Stable; no better attendants than Beasts, and poor Shepherds. His Life was chiefly engaged among the Poor of the earth, men of low stations, and mean callings: His Death was insulted with mockery and derision, and with the infamous company of two Malefactors. But his Funeral is solemnized with circumstances of honourable Respect. A Counsellor, a man of wealth and quality, is the Undertaker; he himself takes down the body from the Cross; he wraps it in fine linen; he lays it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone; yea, hewn for himself, and wherein never man before was

laid.—These were the Honours paid to the deceased body of our dear Redeemer!—And this extraordinary manner of his Interment is full of many useful Reflections.—But we may not omit to observe, that this pious example is a glaring argument against that profane sentiment of too many in our present degenerate age, who count it a thing indifferent, what becomes of their Bodies after Death. But this we shall have occasion to touch upon elsewhere^a. On the other hand, the faithful, poor, and needy servants of Christ, who have more honour for these temples of the Holy Ghost, as well as more genuine remains of true nature and humanity, may draw comfort from this history of their Saviour's Burial: They shall not need to fear, but that Providence will take care to provide them a Grave, if so be they die in the Lord, although they may not have enough to leave behind them, wherewith to defray the expence.—It hath often been seen, that more Honour hath been paid to a poor Saint after his death, than had been shewn him at any time in life.

51. (*The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them*) he was of *Arimathea*, a city of the *Jews* (*who also himself waited for the kingdom of God*)

We are here informed of *Joseph's Place*, as well as of his good *Deed*.—God sees fit to do honour sometimes to the Places that have produced, or belonged to, Good men. So *Magdala*, and here *Arimathea*, are rendred famous to all ages, for the piety and virtue of *Mary* and *Joseph*—Of that *Mary*, who had washed our Lord's feet while living, and afterwards anointed him for his Burial; and of this *Joseph*, who bestowed on him a Grave.—O the Love of God to his dear Children! He loves every thing that belongs to them, and embalms the very memory of the just. Have patience, then, O my soul; be

^a Vide Proper Lesson on the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

contented to want honour till after this Body is dead. Be thou patient also, O my body, to bear indignity and want, until thou art become insensible of both; for, till then, thou art in danger of being hurt by Pride, and fulness of Bread.

We are told, in the foregoing verse, that *Joseph*, though one of the council, had not consented to the counsel and deed of the

52. *This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.*

Jews. Nor yet do we read, in any of the gospels, that he opposed it; or even spake on the occasion against it. We only know, he *consented not*.—This may teach us, not to censure those, who may seem to us, to have acted with too great reserve on some particular occasions; nor yet to be too forward ourselves, where our call and duty to oppose public acts of injustice is not sufficiently clear.—But whatever his reason might be for silence in the Council, we may see plainly it was not through fear of Danger, or for want of Love to the holy *Jesus*; for we find, he *went boldly* ^b *unto Pilate, and begged the body*.—He himself was *Jesus's* disciple: And, as it is said, he waited for the Kingdom of God, no doubt but he understood that the *Messiah* was to die for the sins of the world; that he was also to be Buried in the manner foretold by *Isaiah*; and that this *Jesus* was the *Christ*.—This Faith, and these Principles, solve the reason of his whole conduct.

Here no mention is made of any but *Joseph*. But *St. John* tells us, that *Nicodemus* also came to assist at our Lord's Funeral, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight: And that these two took the Body

53. *And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.*

^b So we read in *Mark* xv. 43.

of *Jesus*, and wound it in linen cloaths with the spices, as the manner of the *Jews* is to bury. We are also told, that *Mary Magdalene*, and the other *Mary*, beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.—These are all, we find, were present at our Lord's interment:—Not one of his Disciples there!—Nevertheless, even this, with every other Circumstance of this solemn transaction, is of important consideration; and all concur to establish our Faith the more firmly in the article of our Lord's Death and Resurrection: At the same time it obviates that forged objection, which the *Jews* raised, “That his Disciples came by night, and stole the Body away.” In the first place, Two of the very *Jewish* Council were the Witnesses of his Death and Burial.—The manner also of embalming and wrapping the Body made it naturally impossible for him to Rise again, though he had come to life.—The great Stone rolled to the door of the Sepulchre, and afterwards sealed down, and guarded by soldiers, made it as impossible for him, had he Risen, to have come out of the grave.—As to the two Women, what could they do, but look on and weep?—And as for the Disciples, it does not appear that they so much as knew the Place where the Body was laid, or who had taken care to give it a Burial. So little ground was there to imagine any collusion in the Death, the Burial, the Resurrection, of *Christ*.—Consequently, so incontestable are the Proofs, that all was conducted by the immediate hand of God; by a power irresistible and divine.

This day of *Preparation* answered to our *Good Friday*
 54. *And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on,* *Evening.*—The holy *Jesus* hung on the tree from
 55. *And the women also which came with him from* Twelve till Three of the clock in the afternoon: As

Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

soon as *Joseph* saw that he was dead, he went to *Pilate*, and craved the Body : *Pilate*, marvelling if he were already dead, and inquiring the truth, gave the Body to *Joseph*. *Joseph* doubtless lost no time in making the necessary preparation ; so that we may reckon, that, before the close of the day, the whole transaction was over. The reason of this dispatch is here given, because it was the *Day of preparation*, and the *Sabbath drew on*.—No vain speculation this, either in the moral or spiritual sense!—It teaches us the wisdom of husbanding our Time aright, whether with regard to our Temporal affairs, especially all acts of Charity and Religion ; or whether we attend to the certainty of our Dissolution, yet uncertainty of the Time when it may happen, it warns us of the necessity of providing for it in time : Nay, that Every day should be a *Day of preparation* for our last End ; seeing we know not the day, nor the hour, when it may come.—Moreover, from the words, *The Sabbath drew on*, another thought is suggested, which should strike our hearts with an holy awe upon *this Day*, as the Antients looked upon it as a Type of that whereon our Lord is expected to come to Judgment ; yea, as the very Day of the year, whereon he shall come ; and therefore called it, by way of Distinction, *Sabbatum magnum*, the great Sabbath.—How devoutly, how seriously, ought we to employ our time on this extraordinary Day, that so we may make it indeed to be *THE Preparation*, and forerunner of our eternal Rest ! Happy they, who, when he cometh, shall be found so doing !

56. *And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments ; and rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment.*

Such as prepare their spices and ointments for Christ ; that is, attend to good works, which yield a grateful odour to him, tho' he need them not (for he was

was embalmed before by *Joseph*) ; these shall assuredly *rest* with him *according to the commandment*.—The command in this Life, is to keep the Seventh Day a Sabbath : So that one day in Seven is a Day of Rest. But in Christ's Kingdom, there is but One eternal Day, and that Day is a Sabbath.—Then, Christ and We shall have ceased from all our works ; he of redemption, and we of Discipline and Probation. Then shall there be no more a *first* and a *second* day of the week ; no new revolution of Time ; but Time itself will be lost and swallowed up in one everlasting, ever-shining Day.—And I profess, the more I think of the notion which the Antients had of this Day, which our holy Church enjoins us to celebrate, I cannot but consider it as the most probable Emblem of that truly Great and Eternal Sabbath.—To which God of his infinite mercy bring us all, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord !—Even so ; come, Lord Jesus ! O come quickly.—Amen.





E A S T E R - E V E N.

First Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

E x o d u s, Chap. xiii.

After Reading the Lesson.

IT is not easy to assign a reason for the choice of this Lesson, upon this occasion: The Ritualists, whom I have consulted, afford us no light herein. But that the Church had a particular view in the Choice, is evident from her appointing this Chapter for *Easter-Even*; and then, going back to the foregoing chapter (the xiith of *Exodus*) for her Lesson on *Easter-day*. So that she inverts the order, both as to the series of the time, and connexion of the context: Which, by the way, is a plain argument, that the Reformers of our Church, and Compilers of our Liturgy, had a constant eye to the Propriety of the Lessons. And may we not say, this inverted order of the Church is somewhat like to *Jacob's* crossing his hands, when he blessed the two sons of *Joseph*, setting his right hand on the younger, and his left on the other, "Guiding his hands wittingly" (as the Holy Ghost witnesseth); and therefore not by chance, or thro' any partial fondness?—In like manner, instead of giving us these chapters, as they lie in course, the church

church points to us, as it were by one hand, the xiiith for this day's Lesson, being the day of our Lord's Burial; and by the other, the xith chapter for To-morrow; the Day of his Resurrection.

"Wisdom, saith our Lord, is justified of all her children^a." It behoveth therefore every faithful son of our holy mother the Church, to endeavour to do justice to the Wisdom she hath shewn in the choice of her Proper Lessons: But this we cannot do, except we carefully attend to the scope and design in making such Choice.—Now, to do this, with regard to our present Lesson, it may give us some light, if we consider the following particulars.

This Day, as we observed before, was antiently called, both by the *Jewish* and Christian Church, the GREAT SABBATH^b; and was, in the primitive times, one of the stated Days of public Baptism, on which the *Competentes* (as they called the duly instructed Candidates) were baptized.—The ensuing Sabbath, or Saturday sevensnight, was called *Clausum Pascha*, or the Close of *Easter*: The intermediate days between this and that were called [*Octo dies Neophytorum*] the Eight Days of the new-made Christians. And these, during that time, wore white garments, in token of the Innocence and Purity conferred on them in Baptism. It was also a custom on this Day for the Bishop, in imitation of our Saviour, to wash the feet of the new-baptized persons.—We are also told, that among the *Jews* there was a Tradition, that the *Messiah* would come on the midnight of the Passover; which opinion the Primitive Christians seem to have entertained, by their holding their Vigil before *Easter-day*, till that time of night.—A relict of this Custom remained until the Reformation; but was idly called, thro' ignorance of the true reason, *watching the sepulchre*.

From these hints, we may presume, the first compilers of our Liturgy, intending to direct the Re-

^a *Matt.* xi. 19.

^b *Sabbatum magnum.*

formed Christian to the spiritual use of such antient Ceremonies, proposed to recal our meditation to the primary design of this great Mystery; which, with humble deference we may conceive to be this:

As the *Jew* called this day the *great sabbath*, in regard of their feast of the Passover; and likewise, as an anniversary Memorial of their deliverance from the bondage of *Egypt*; the Christian also may rightly call it so too; both as it was the Day on which our Saviour RESTED in his grave, after he had finished the great work of our Redemption from the bondage of Sin and Death; and as it is expected, that about the same Period of Time, he will return again, to give his people Rest Eternal at the Resurrection.

What is mentioned in our Lesson of *sanctifying the first-born*^c of the *Israelites*, and consecrating them to the Lord; and of the *first-born* of the *Egyptians*, which were to be slain; may aptly suggest another cause why the Church made choice of this chapter for this day's Lesson.—Christ, dying for the World, took away Original Sin (which was the sin of the world); but in dying for his Church, and by the sprinkling of his Blood, his People were saved, so as not one of them died; his Passion effected the one, and saved from death; his Resurrection, the other, and raised to Life.—Again, the *setting apart* every Male that *opened the matrix*, and sanctifying it to the LORD, may represent the holy and happy effects of Baptism, by which the womb of the Church is opened, and her children dedicated to God, and made His children, even his *first-born*; for so all that are born of her are called, “The Church of the First-born” (*Heb. xii. 23.*)—But this New Birth follows not the course of Nature, but of Grace; therefore as children of Grace, they are preserved alive: And, being made members

of Christ, and one with him, they, in virtue of this Union, become the First-born of God, as He is.

Again: If, according to the mystic sense, we consider the week ensuing from this *Sabbatum magnum*, until the close of *Easter*, as an Emblem of that New course of life which Christians ought to lead, from the time of their entering thereon, to the time of their dissolution; then the *Jews* practice of abstaining from Leaven for the whole Seven Days, and the new baptized Christians wearing of White Vestments for the same space of time, will carry in them the very same Instruction; namely, what the Apostle inculcates to us, That "Christ our Passover being sacrificed for us, we should put away the leaven of malice and wickedness;" that we should "cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light."





E A S T E R - E V E N.

Second Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

H E B R E W S, Chap. iv.

The true Sabbath; or, That rest of God, which every Christian must strive to enter into.

1. **L**ET us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2. For unto us was ^a the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being ^b mixed with faith in them that heard it.

THE promise of Rest is here called the Gospel, or glad tidings. And well may it be so to poor mortals, who are continually exposed to the toils and troubles of this miserable world.—Man is even born to trouble; and it is our Portion while we sojourn here below: But, for our comfort and support, there is a Promise of Rest:

And this promise is not only grounded on the infallible word of God, referred to by the Apostle in Psalm xcv. but is still more strongly confirmed to us Christians, by the extraordinary event which we this Day celebrate, both as the memorial of our Lord's Rest from his sufferings, and the pledge and earnest of our own. But then the Condition of this happy Sabbath is faith in Him, who so rested, and hath

^a Hath the gospel been preached.

^b Not having been.

sanctified

sanctified to us the Rest of death ; yea, rather, is risen to a more blessed Rest, eternal in the heavens. —It remaineth only to Believers, and the faithful people of God, to enter into this *Rest*.

3. *For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

4. *For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.*

5. *And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*

or the rest he gave the *Israelites* in *Canaan*; or else some future rest. Now, of these, the two first were past long before *David's* time; wherefore he could not mean them; but must intend a Rest which was yet to come.—And what *rest* was that, but this Evangelical Rest; a rest which the Gospel has now published to all, and *promised* to Believers, even a rest from Sin, and spiritual slavery, in this life; and in consequence thereof, Rest Eternal in the next?—Howbeit, if we cast back our eye to the creation of this material world, we are there taught this useful lesson, That as God rested not till he had finished *all* his works; so neither are we to expect the true rest, till we have finished those works he hath given us to do, and prepared for us to walk in; and which, in our baptismal Vow, we undertook to perform.

We which have believed do enter]; even Now enter into Rest: For, beside the Rest which good men enjoy in Death (at which time, “they who die in the Lord, “shall rest from their labours”), there is also a Spiritual Rest, which, by Faith, is entered into, even in this life.—And this seems to be the *Rest* here immediately spoken of by the Apostle.—His argument runs thus, What *David* speaks of the Lord's Rest, must mean either his rest at the creation,

8.
thua
then
have
9.
fore
God.

6. *Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached, entred not in because of unbelief:*

7. *Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

his followers must not expect much better fare. To this suffering image of their Lord they must also be conformed here, if they would reign with him hereafter. And yet the divine Proclamation runs, *TO-DAY* (even this present day; and therefore every day in life) *if ye will hear His voice* (that is, the voice of *Jesus*) saying, to all that are weary, and heavy-laden, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest^c." He cries, *Come*, while it is called *To day*: The church seconds the call^d, and every day invites to draw near with faith, and receive that rest and peace which the world cannot give,—nor take away.—It is Faith then doth all: Even *To-day*, in the very midst of all our secular perturbations, faith gives us Rest in God; a Rest from all the works of vanity, and, consequently, from all vexation of spirit; a Rest from our Own works, for all such are works of Sin.

8. *For if Jesus [i. e. Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.*

9. *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*

As to Temporal rest, or an entire exemption from the troubles and cares of life, it is not to be expected on this side the grave. The very best of men, nay, chiefly they of the household of faith, have generally the least of this Rest; not even *Jesus* himself enjoyed it; he had not on earth a place where to lay his head. And

There is then a double rest, annexed as a promise to the New Covenant; first, That spiritual rest, which puts an end to the mortal and painful works of Sin; and secondly, The Heavenly rest, into which the true

^c Matthew xi.

^d See annotation at the end.

Jesus conducts, and causes his faithful people to enter, as his type *Joshua* did those *Israelites* into *Canaan*, who had not fallen in the wilderness through unbelief; So that there is both in present, and in reversion, a *rest* that *remaineth to the people of God*.

10. *For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.*

11. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*

This Day may well be called the GREAT SABBATH: God the Son rested from his great work of Redemption, as he had before rested, on the same day of the week, from the works of Creation. —All works are, indeed, alike easy to God; yet these great works carry in them an appearance of great Labour and Pains; and therefore raise a more affecting idea of the *Rest*, which ensued. In like manner they, who *cease from their own works*, as God *did from his*, shall find the *Rest* of death so much the more sweet, as their Labour to subdue sin was the more arduous and intense.—As such persons therefore spare no pains *to enter into that rest*, so no prospect of Rest appears to them more desirable, or perfect, than that grand Catastrophe and End of all things, which is to put a final conclusion, at once, to this miserable scene of Sin, and Death, and Sorrow.—And this is a reflection not unsuitable to the devotions of this Day, and as it hath been thought by some, the type and forerunner of the general Dissolution*.—All the time of this present life of ours, our Lord seems to lie asleep in the grave, or as he once lay sleeping in the hinder part of the ship, while his Disciples were toiling in a storm. The Church, and all true Believers, labour to awaken him, with incessant cries, “Save, Lord, or we perish.”—And what joy and transport will it be to all such, to see their Saviour arising from his place, rebuking the

* See reflections on our first lesson.

wind and sea; saying, Peace, be still; and their great storm hushed at once into as great a calm!

12. *For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

13. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

This is added, not only to encourage our Faith, but to shew the danger of Unbelief. They who slight and disbelieve the gracious Promises of God, assuring them of Rest and Peace, upon condition of Faith, shall find that *Word* no vain, impotent Word, but *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.* Those whom it doth not prevail upon to accept of grace and mercy, it shall inevitably destroy. It is of that irresistible force, as well as such subtle and piercing efficacy, as to penetrate into the inmost recesses of the Soul and Conscience: So that nothing can either oppose his will, nor lie concealed from his eyes, *with whom we have to do.* For this Word is no other than *Christ* himself, with whom *we* Christians have more immediately to do, as we are his creatures, and his subjects, in every capacity;—natural, moral, and divine. It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; it is he who new-made, and created us again unto God, when we had lost and destroyed ourselves.

14. *Seeing then that we have a great high-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

Our Lord *Jesus Christ* is here called *the Son of God*, to distinguish him from the *Jesus*, or *Joshua*, whom the Apostle hath mentioned before, verse 8. And this *Jesus* being the *High-Priest* of that Religion which we profess, and having now *passed* (not as the *Jewish High-Priest*,

Priest, into the most holy place of the material temple, but) *into heaven* itself, even to the throne of God, there to sit on the right hand of the Father, and make intercession for us, *let us* not waver, let us not faint, let us not give over, but *hold fast our profession* unto the end; not doubting but we also shall pass thither where he is, if we endure to the end; and, at length, enter into the Rest of our Lord.

15. *For we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

Although He be so highly exalted, yet he still humbleth himself, to regard the *infirmities* of his faithful servants. —As he once submitted to all the Temptations incident to the human nature, or which are brought upon mankind by the enemies of our salvation, and was *tempted in all points like as we are*, so he still retains a tender and compassionate sense and *feeling of our infirmities*; of our natural Weakness, as well as Danger; and therefore is ever ready to help and defend us, that so we may not be undone by our enemies Malice, nor our own Frailty.

16. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

We need not, therefore, be afraid to approach the *throne of grace*, in all our troubles, necessities, or distresses. Much less should we slight the gracious and ready *help* of our Redeemer, because he is so willing and desirous to grant us mercy, and *grace to help us in time of need*. —He that will not accept Christ's affectionate invitation to his *throne of grace*, because the favour is voluntary, and so easy to obtain, how will he have confidence to appear before his tribunal of wrath and justice? Nay, how will he avoid the latter, if he neglect the former?

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Ver. 7. *He cries, Come; the church seconds the call.*] We may conceive this call exemplified to us every day, by the tolling of our Churches bells, and calling us to the Public Prayers. This was one day strongly impressed on the author's mind, on hearing the bells chime to Prayers; and occasioned the following lines:

*Come, come to me, the meek Redeemer cries
Come, come to Christ, the echoing Bell replies):
Come, all ye weary, all ye heavy press'd;
Your burdens bring, and I will give you rest.
Awake, my soul; leave thy soft bed and home;
And answer'ing say, I come, dear Lord, I come.*

The same thought, doubtless, gave occasion to that inscription on the Saints Bell of John Baptist at Stamford, which we read of in Mr. Peck.—*Venite cum voco.* “Come when I call.”





E A S T E R - D A Y .

P R O P E R L E S S O N S .

The First	} for M. Pr.	{	Exodus, Chap. xii.
Second			Romans, Chap. vi.
The First	} for Ev. Pr.	{	Exodus, Chap. xiv.
Second			Acts, Chap. ii. ver. 22.

P R E F A C E .

WE are now come to the great Festival of the anniversary commemoration of our Saviour's RESURRECTION, which for its antiquity and excellency challenges the precedence of all other Feasts, and was deservedly called of the antients the Queen of festivals.

This is the Day which the Lord indeed hath made, and peculiarly distinguished; let us be glad and rejoice therein.—“This venerable Festival (said the Emperor “Constantine”) we have received from our Saviour; “and by it hold our hopes of Immortality.”—Without it, all that Christ had done for us besides, would be of no benefit or advantage to us.

This is that mysterious Day which brake open the gates of Hell, and brought a release to the prisoners of hope; which, “by the blood of his Covenant, sent forth his “prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water”^b.”

The release and deliverance from the pit, here meant, and from the power of our spiritual enemies, particularly

^a Eusebius de vita Constant.

^b Isaiah lxi. Zech. ix. 12.

our last enemy death ("for the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death"), is most significantly represented to us in the history which the Church reads to us this day, of the Israelites deliverance out of the land of Egypt, and the total destruction of their enemies in the Red Sea.

Such a relation of God's great goodness, the mighty and wonderful work which he had done for his antient people; especially as it was confessedly the figure and pledge of our far greater deliverance by JESUS CHRIST; cannot but dispose us to receive the glad tidings, published in the Gospel of the day, with the highest exultation, and spiritual rejoicing; as well as prepare us to make that use of this grand article of our Lord's Resurrection, which the other Scriptures for this day's service do recommend; namely, a strict conformity thereto in our lives and conversations; that so, we, who, in correspondence to his Death, professed to die unto Sin, and have been buried with him in Baptism, should rise again with him in Newness of life; and approve ourselves the children of the Resurrection, by "seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God^d."

E A S T E R - D A Y.

First Proper Lesson, for Morning Prayer.

Exodus, Chap. xii.

The institution of the passover. The first-born of the Egyptians slain. The departure of the Israelites out of Egypt.

I. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying;

THE time was now fully come, wherein God determined to deliver his people from their bond-

^c 1 Cor. xv. 26.

^d Col. iii. 1.

2. *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.*

age in *Egypt*, and put them in possession of the promised land. In order to perpetuate the remembrance of this wonderful event, and imprint a lasting and grateful sense of this mercy on their minds, the divine wisdom was pleased to change the stile and method of reckoning their year; and to appoint that the month *Abib*^c, whereon this great deliverance was effected, should, for the future, be the *first month* of their ecclesiastical year (as *Tisri*, or *September*, had hitherto been of their civil year); and that all their religious transactions and accounts should be dated from this extraordinary period, as a new and most memorable *Æra*.

3. *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.*

4. *And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house, take it, according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb.*

5. *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year; ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats.*

Next, he institutes the great Festival of the *Passover*, not only in commemoration of this signal Deliverance, but as a typical Representation of the future, and far more extraordinary Redemption of Mankind by *Jesus Christ*.—Every master of a family (or two, if one were too little to eat it up) is required to provide one of the choicest male lambs he could procure for that service; that so it might be the more suitable Figure of the spotless Lamb of God, who was to take away the sin of the world.—It might also be taken from among the *Sheep*, or the *Goats*; to shew, not

^c Which is also called *Nisan*, and answers to our *March*, and part of *April*.

only that *Christ* came, as of righteous, so of wicked Progenitors, and therefore such blemishes in his Genealogy were to be no objection to him; but also, to represent his Meekness as a *Lamb*, his imputative Sin as the Kid of a *goat*; yet both were to be *without Blemish*, to express his own unspotted and inherent Innocence.

6. *And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening*[†]. How exactly did the time of our Saviour's Passion correspond with its Type! The *Lamb* was to be taken up the *tenth* day of the month: —On the self-same day of the month the blessed *Jesus* was taken up, as it were,

and carried into *Jerusalem*[‡], the whole multitude attending his extraordinary entry.—This answered to our *Palm-Sunday*, or *Sunday* next before *Easter*.—The *Monday*, *Tuesday*, *Wednesday*, we find him daily conversant amongst them. On the fourteenth day, being our *Thursday*, he eats the Passover with his disciples, and in the room thereof institutes the Sacrament of the Eucharist, or Christian Passover.—And in the Evening, (or rather, as the original expresses it, *between the two evenings*, namely, the afternoon of the fifteenth day, which exactly falls in with our *Good Friday*) he submitted to be put to death by the *whole congregation of Israel*; and thereby literally accomplished all that had been prefigured of him by the *Lamb*.—Moreover, the *keeping up the Lamb* from the tenth to the fourteenth day, figures to us, not only that *Christ* was to live and abide amongst men for some time in the flesh, that he might be a lively and visible pattern of holiness and innocence in his life and conversation; but, together with every circumstance attending that sacred institution, doth most aptly admonish us of the solemn and serious prepara-

[†] *Heb.* between the two evenings.

[‡] *Luke* xix.

tion, wherewith we are to approach the true Passover, the blessed Sacrament of his Death and Passion, as we shall have occasion to observe in the progress of our Lesson.

7. *And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.*

The blood was to be sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintels of the outer door of each house, as a mark of insurance, to secure them from the destroying angel; *i. e.* from God's wrath, and the power of

death.—It was also to be sprinkled with a bunch of Hyssop (*ver. 22.*); a lowly shrub growing in rocky places; to represent that Humility and Faith, wherewith we are to come to the holy Table: By the first, to teach us the necessity of mortifying the sin of Pride, whereby man first fell from God; and secondly, that by Faith we are to be restored and united to him again.—Note, The *threshold* was not to be sprinkled, to signify the reverence due to the Blood of the Covenant; the virtue of which was to be over our Heads, and on every Side, for a blessing and security to us, but not to be trampled and trod upon.

8. *And they shall eat the flesh in that night; roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.*

But Faith alone is not sufficient to intitle us to the benefits of Christ's death: We must also TAKE and EAT; must receive Christ by Eating, as well as by Believing.—Faith indeed

applies his merits to us, and makes the sacred Elements to be verily and indeed (*i. e.* to all the intended effects and purposes) the Body and Blood of Christ. But to EAT is his Command: Eating therefore is a mark of Faith, as well as an act of Obedience.

The Passover was to be eaten *in the night*: Now the *night*, in God's word, is a common and expref-

five emblem of this world, and of the time of our sojourning here : So that we are hereby taught, not only the use and benefit of this Sacrament, for our comfort and support under the afflictions of this mortal life, but that it is to be continued while this night of Life shall last, until the morning^h come, and our sun arise ; and thereby shew the Lord's Death until he comeⁱ.—It was also to be eaten *roast with fire* ; to represent, in the most lively manner, the sharp sufferings of Christ, and to reconcile us to our own.—*With unleavened bread*, of sincerity and truth. *With bitter herbs* also, of mortification, penitential sorrow, and deep contrition.

By no means to eat of it

9. *Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire: his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.* *raw ; i. e. to come unprepared to the holy Table.* By no means to use *water*, but *fire*, in preparing our Passover.—Water is the emblem of transitory comforts;

fire, of God : No worldly comforts, interests, or views, must influence, or intermix with, our preparations.—God alone, to whom our Passover is offered, and his Holy Spirit, by whom we offer it, must fit and prepare it for himself.—The *head*, the *feet*, the *appurtenances*, are also to be dressed ; to teach us, that we are not to divide Christ ; we must receive him Whole : Not only his *Head*, or Divinity, but his *Legs* also, or Humanity : Nay, not only his Head and his Feet, but his *Purtenances* likewise ; even all that belongs to him ; his Word, his Church, his Ministers, his Sacraments.

The *Israelites* were to eat up all (if they could) at one meal ; to teach us, saith *Ainsworth*, a diligent care

10. *And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning: and that which re-*

^h Ps. xlix. 14.

ⁱ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

maineth of it until the morning, ye shall burn with fire.

for the present enjoying of Christ by Faith; and receiving his whole covenant without delay. For by the *morning*, the change of our state is often signified (see *Psalms* xxx. 5. *Is.* xvii. 14, &c.). Sleep intervening, is an image of death: And the *Jews* thought it unlawful for any to eat of the Passover after he had slept, although it were in the beginning of the night.—So manna might not be left until the morning; nor some other sacrifices^k.—*Theodore's* Remark on this place is likewise very instructive: “As God had before commanded a competent number to eat the Passover together, thereby teaching them brotherly Love, and Charity to the Poor; now he admonishes, that the Remains should be *burnt*, and not reserved to the next day; hereby compelling them, as it were, to call the poor and needy to them.”—Again, saith he, “by prohibiting them to keep any of it until the morning, we are to understand, that in the life to come, there shall be no use of signs; for then shall we behold the things themselves, and enjoy the substance.”

Hereby we may likewise understand the unlawfulness of reserving the consecrated elements to any other time, or for any other purpose, than Christ hath ordained; as we see practised in the present church of *Rome*; but condemned by ours, in her twenty-eighth article of Religion, where she expressly asserts, “The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper was not, by Christ’s ordinance, reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.”

Ye shall burn what is left with fire.] Meaning the Bones, saith *St. Augustine*, or perchance some of the Flesh; that so all might be consumed. And such was the law for other Sacrifices, as we before observed; which, if reserved too long, it were impiety to eat;

^k See *Exod.* xvi. 19. *Lew.* xxii. 30.

and therefore were commanded to be burnt¹.—Hereby God might also premonish the *Jewish* Church, that when the Morning (*i. e.* the time of grace and light, through the Resurrection of Christ) should come, there would be no longer use, and consequently no need of continuing and reserving those legal shadows, which would have their full end and accomplishment at our Lord's death; and thenceforward be condemned as unlawful and abominable; necessary to be done away, and *burnt*, as it were, by the fire of God's Word and Spirit.—See *Col.* ii. 16, 22. *Gal.* iv. 9, 10, 11.—To which purpose see also the Prophets in many places. *Jer.* xvi. 14. *Ch.* iii. 16, &c.

11. *And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the LORD's passover.* This life is a Pilgrimage, a state of Warfare, a Theatre of Action; and here we are taught what we are to do: First; our *Loins* (especially when we come to the Lord's Supper) must be *girded*; that is, our coming must

be with a determined Readiness to do our Master's will in every instance of Duty: With Strength and Courage to resist Temptations, and all the assaults of the enemies of our Salvation: With Righteousness and Honesty in all dealings with our Neighbour. With Sobriety towards ourselves; especially Temperance and Chastity: With Truth towards God, both the great truths of his Religion, as well as sincerity of Heart.—Thus, to sum up all in the words of *St. Peter*, “*girding up the loins of our mind, let us be sober, and hope unto the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance*”^m.

¹ *Levit.* vii. 15, 18.

^m *1 Pet.* i. 13.

Secondly;

Secondly; *With our shoes on.*] Another sign of Readiness to go forth, and do our Lord's will; of deliverance also from the bondage of Sin; as the going *barefoot* was the sign of Captivity; of joyfulness for such our deliverance and escape from the pollutions of the world through lust, and from the wrath of God; as, contrary-wise, in times of sorrow, men were wont to be barefooted:—Lastly, as St. *Paul* tells us, it is a figure of the Gospel of peace, wherewith our feet should be shod and preparedⁿ.—Of which also the Holy Ghost speaketh, “How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O princes daughter^o!”

Thirdly; *With your staff in your hand.*] With your staff; that is, with the Word of God; which gives us his promises, and heavenly comforts, to guide our Feet, sustain our infirmities, and prevent Weariness; as well as to defend us from the Enemy:—*In our hand*, as another mark of Readiness for our Christian Race, ready and expedite, to go, to run, to fight, or to depart from this *Egypt* of the world, whenever the Captain of our Salvation shall give the word of Command.

Fourthly; *In haste.*] That is, with holy Fear: So the original word in *Deut.* xx. 3. signifies an hastening away through fear, consequently with Diligence, with Fervency; according to that of the Apostle, “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord^p.”—For the time is short, and will admit of no delay; there is no resting-place, no abiding city there.—No loitering in *Egypt*, lest we lose the heavenly *Canaan*: No lingering in *Sodom*^q, lest we be consumed.

Fifthly; *It is the Lord's passover.*] This, as an article proposed to our Belief, is added as a reason for all the preceding Preparations.—With Faith we are to approach, and draw near; by Faith, to discern and receive this holy Sacrament; and with Faith to

ⁿ *Eph.* vi. 15. ^o *Cant.* vii. 1. ^p *Rom.* xii. 11. ^q *Gen.* xix.

depart :—Faith must influence the whole action ; begin our preparation, apply the benefits of it to our souls, and perfect our obedience.—His sacred Blood is to be on our *Doors*, to remind us of this great object of our Faith, both in our going out, and coming in ; at our houses and homes, as well as at the Altar.—*It is the Lord's passover*, who was sacrificed for us. And how can we think of Rest and Ease, and living here, who profess to commemorate and serve a Dying Lord ?

12. *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the LORD.*

This last and sorest Plague God had before threatened the *Egyptians* with (chap. xi. 4, 5.) ; and fixed the night, and the precise time of the night, when it should happen, viz. at Midnight.—By the *first-born* here devoted to destruction, we are (by many parallel allegories

in Scripture-history) taught to understand man in the state of nature, as contradistinguished to man in a state of Grace. Such we find generally rejected of God ; as were *Cain* and *Esau*, the Elder sons of *Jacob*, of *Jesse*, of *David*, &c. ; and the younger sons preferred, as *Abel*, *Jacob*, &c. ; which doubtless was to represent to us, the rejection, and (here, by the smiting the *first-born* of *Egypt*) the Death of all, who bear the image of the First *Adam*, deriving from him the taint and guilt of Original Sin, and remaining therein.—Such are said to be “ born after the flesh ” ; to be “ the children of wrath ” — “ Under the curse and sentence of condemnation ”.—But the Second man (in opposition to the First *Adam*) is “ the Lord from heaven ”.—His seed are the blessed of the “ Lord ”.—They are “ passed from death unto life ” ; “ they are the children of God, and ves-

¹ Gal. iv. 29.

² Eph. ii. 3.

³ Gal. v. 10.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 47.

⁵ Ps. cxv.

⁶ 1 John iii. 14.

“ self

“sels of Mercy.” These the destroying Angel shall *pass over*, and have no power to *smite* them.—Hence then we learn, that it is in virtue of our Second Birth only, that we are intitled to God’s Protection, and secured from Death.—“’Tis Baptism doth now “save us^z,” for, “except we be born again, we “cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven^a.” Wherefore all the *first-born in the land of Egypt*; i. e. all those, who are out of the Church; shall be smitten, and die, both *man and beast*; for what is man in the state of nature, but like unto the beasts that perish^b, and therefore fit to be upon the level with brutes?—*And against all the Gods of Egypt will I execute judgment.*—Most of the Gods of *Egypt* were *beasts*: And what are the Gods of the natural and carnal man, but the base and sensual comforts of this world, which perish with the using; the creature, rather than the Creator?—Such Gods as cannot profit or save in the day of vengeance, both they and their worshippers shall be destroyed together^c.

13. *And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

The paschal Lamb was to the *Jews*, what the Lord’s Supper is to us, a *token* and sacrament of our Redemption by Christ: Only that was a Type to them; this a memorial to us: They were to look forward in Hope; We to look back in Faith, on the same *Blood* of the

Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the world. So that the prophet’s saying [“They shall “look on him whom they have pierced^d,”] is true, both of them and us. And as the Object of their Hope, and our Faith, was the same, even the Blood of *Jesus*; so the virtue and efficacy of their typical

^y Gal. iii. 26. Rom. ix. 23. ^a 1 Pet. iii. 21. ^a John iii. 5.
^b Psalm xlix. 20. ^c Isa. i. 31. ^d Zech. xii. 10.

and our commemorative Sacrifice, is the same also; namely, a deliverance from Death,—temporal to them, —spiritual to both.—*The Plague* [of Sin] hath no power to destroy, nor the Devil [that destroying Angel] any licence to slay, where this mark appears, except it be those, who go *out of their houses* ^e.—Hence note, the Houses marked with the Blood of the Lamb, represent to us the Church of Christ, the Door of which is that holy Covenant, by which both they and we are admitted into it; and none but such as Abide therein, are safe.—Note we also, in a more private and restrained sense, that as every Member of Christ is his House and Temple, the same mark is set on all that are so; with this only difference between us and the *Jew*; on Them it is set by Circumcision, on Us by Baptism: They were marked in the Foreskin, we in the Forehead ^f. And possibly this Distinction is signified by the *Side-posts* to them, by the *Lintel* to us. But the *Blood* which marked, and which secures both, is the very same, namely, the precious Blood of Christ, the Lamb of God.

14. *And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations: you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.*

This is one of those standing Feasts of the Law, which God commands to be kept by an ordinance for ever; consequently is binding on the Christian, as it was on the Jewish Church; and that for the reasons above-mentioned, which are of equal force under the Gospel, as under the Law; and therefore, must be perpetual. No alteration is made in the Substance, but only in the Circumstantial, of this holy Feast; the same Lord, who instituted it, and whose Feast it is [it is a Feast to the LORD—The sacrifice of the LORD's passover, ver. 27.], having substituted Bread and Wine, in the room of the

^e Ver. 22.

^f Rev. vii. 3. Ch. xxii. 4.

paschal Lamb.—Their Passover was to continue, till he should come in Person to Die and Redeem: Our Sacrament is to shew forth his Death, until he come to Judge.

15. *Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.*

16. *And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation unto you: no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.*

17. *And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations, by an ordinance for ever.*

18. *In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one-and-twentieth day of the month at even.*

The Feast of unleavened Bread is here instituted; and is a distinct Festival from the Passover, as commencing after the paschal Day, or rather, on the evening of the same Day. Hence it came to pass, that the one ending, and the other beginning, on the same Day, they are sometimes called by the same Name, as if there were no Distinction or Difference. So St. Luke (ch. xxi. 1.) writes, “The feast of “unleavened bread drew “nigh, which is called the “Passover.”—This Feast indeed, coming so immediately on the heels of the Passover, was a kind of continuation of it; and, lasting for seven days, or a whole week after the Passover, took in, not only the Jewish Sabbath (which for that reason is said particularly to be an High Day, *John* xix. 31.), but also included that First day of the week whereon our Saviour arose from the dead, or our EASTER-SUNDAY; which we have much more reason to count an High

19. *Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.*

20. *Ye shall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.*

High day, as it is the Principal Festival of the whole Christian Year.—This sufficiently shews the great regard, which God requires to be paid to this most holy and solemn season of EASTER.—

The Manner also, how we are to observe it, is represented to us by the command of *putting away of leaven*: The spiritual meaning whereof is this, *Christ*

our Passover, or true paschal Lamb, being slain, hath by his Death, put away the poison, or mortal effects of Sin, which we derive from our first Parents, that contagion of nature, and guilt of original Sin. But still there remains in all men, even after our Baptismal Regeneration, a *Leaven*, an unhappy tincture, or proneness and disposition to evil; some roots and fibres, as it were, of that original Corruption. Even like the earth, which, though cleansed ever so often from weeds, is naturally apt to produce more weeds, and still finds work enough to employ the most diligent improver; so is it also with this Nature of ours. Even after Baptism, after the most solemn purgations, a superfluity of naughtiness remains; the old Leaven and propensity to vice still abides in us.—This is what is left for us to *put away*; and is to be the daily, the continual work of Repentance, but more especially in our preparations for the holy Communion, and other offices of religion, according to that advice of St. Paul, in his instruction for the right use of this our present holy Festival.—
 “ Christ our passover (saith he) is sacrificed for us;
 “ therefore let us keep the feast: Not with the old
 “ leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and
 “ wickedness, but the unleavened bread of sincerity

“and truth.”—The *Jews* also, in their observation of this Feast, have set us an example, how it ought to be kept by us Christians.—As soon as it began, they lighted up candles, and searched diligently in every hole and corner of the house, for whatever old *leaven* was left; and threw out all they found, with some mark of abhorrence, either burning it in the fire, or breaking it small, and casting it into the winds, or into the sea. Thus ought we, with our lights burning, to look into every corner of our Hearts, search out our spirit, and examine diligently if there be any root of bitterness, any remains of Leaven or sourness in our Passions and Affections, and cast it wholly from us; either destroying it by the fire of divine Love, by the wind of holy sighs and prayers, or the water and tears of Repentance.—Whosoever doth not do this, but continues to eat of *leavened bread*, and feeds, as it were, upon his old vices; *that soul shall be cut off from Israel*.—This sentence was to be executed on the *Jew*, according to the letter, by a temporal death, as a treasonable and presumptuous violation of a Positive Law; but is as certainly inflicted on us, by a deprivation of the spiritual Life, or Death of the *Soul*; which, of the two, is much the sorer Punishment.—And though it be here threatened as an infliction from God; it is, in truth, but the necessary and unavoidable effect of Impenitence, and a resolved continuance in Sin:—That Soul cannot but perish, which will not repent.—Another consideration arising from this Feast of *unleavened bread* is this, That as the former part of our Lesson, which relates immediately to the *pass-over*, suggests to us the necessary Preparation to be made *Before*, and the conduct to be observed At the holy Table; this institution, immediately subsequent thereto, doth as plainly point to us what ought to be the behaviour of every Christian, *After*

receiving that blessed Sacrament.—The term of *seven days* is an emblem of human life; the *putting away* all *leaven*, and eating nothing but *Unleavened* bread for that time, teaches us how pure and holy we ought to lead our whole lives, ever after we have been admitted to the Communion of Christ's sacred Body and Blood; how careful to purge away all Sin, and to eschew it for the future.

21. *Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover.*

22. *And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel, and the two side-posts, with the blood that is in the bason: and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.*

23. *For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.*

24. *And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee, and to thy sons for ever.*

25. *And it shall come to*

We have here *Moses* delivering God's message to the people: On which occasion, we may remark the great Use and Benefit of faithful Ministers to communicate to us the divine will, and instruct us therein.—This method of information in the Principles of Religion, is not only most suitable to our nature, and present condition, in the flesh; but is best adapted to assist the weakness of our Understanding; and for explaining whatever may seem difficult or obscure in the word or will of God: Thus, for instance, the *Israelites* were commanded of God to take of the Blood, and *strike with it the lintel and two side-posts of their doors*. But wherewith, or in what manner, this was to be done, is not specified: *Moses* therefore, to obviate the Question that might arise, as well as for the sake of Uniformity (which is ever most pleasing

pass, when ye be come to the land, which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service?

26. *And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What meant you by this service?*

27. *That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head, and worshipped.*

28. *And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.*

of a good Pastor we may observe in the conduct and example of *St. Paul*, particularly in those expressions he sometimes uses,—“ I speak this by permission, “ and not of commandment^b.” And again, “ To “ the rest speak I, not the Lord.” And again, “ I “ command; yet not I, but the Lord.”—By which expressions we may likewise understand, that there is a Difference to be observed between absolute and prudential Precepts, between positive Commands, and mere Advices: That some things are, and other things are not, left to our own choice; that though some things may be lawful, yet they may not be expedient.—The example of the children of *Israel's*

to God), directs them to do it with a *bunch of Hyssop*, dipped in the Blood.—Again, he adds another piece of Advice, which the Lord had not expressly commanded, but was a very wise precaution; that *none of them should go out of the door of their houses until the morning*. It is also left to *Moses* to recommend the perpetuating of the paschal feast, to be a standing *Memorial* of this great Deliverance to them, and to their Posterity.—It is easy from hence to conceive the great blessing and advantage of having a wise and faithful spiritual Guide, to expound to us the Law of God, and direct our Conscience.—The like benefit and happiness

^b 1 Cor. vii. 6, &c.

ready obedience, in doing *as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron*, is worthy of our notice and imitation.— See also their Faith commended by the Apostle, *Heb. xi. 28.*

29. *And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle.*

30. *And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians: and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not an house where there was not one dead.*

kind, and to slay the First-born of *Pharaoh*, and of his Subjects.—Another thing we may observe, is this; that, by slaying precisely the *first*, not the second, third, or fourth sons, all our Children, and the Order of their birth, are specially known and observed of God. This may intimate to us, that neither Children nor Parents should attempt to invert that Order, which he hath established in Families by Seniority or precedence of Birth.—This tenth and last plague, of slaying the first-born, is, with great elegance, described by the author of the book of *Wisdom*, Chap. xviii.

31. *And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from amongst my people, both you, and the*

The reason for smiting the *first-born*, so far as concerns mankind in general, hath already been remarked, on ver. 12. But the particular cause why the first-born in the land of Egypt were slain, was the strict retributive Justice of God, because *Pharaoh* had not only enslaved *Israel*, whom God himself calls his Son, even his First-born (ch. iv. 22.), but had put to death all the male infants, to prevent their increase.—And no law could be more equitable and just, than to punish thus in

Here we see the proud heart of *Pharaoh* is, at last, subdued, and compelled to obey the will of God, without reserve or limitation. Nevertheless, as this obe-

children of Israel: and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.

32. *Also take your flocks, and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone: and bless me also.*

33. *And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, We be all dead men.*

“suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy¹.”

34. *And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.*

35. *And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses: and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment.*

36. *And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required: and they spoiled the Egyptians.*

dience was extorted, not free; and the effect only of a slavish and servile fear; so it held not long: He soon repented of his repentance (as such sort of constrained penitents generally do), and soon after perished in the *Red Sea*.—Which aptly reminds us of the Wise Man's saying, and should be a warning to us all, “He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall

The Instruction we may gather from hence, is this; That, so soon as ever we find our heart enlarged, and set at liberty, by the power of divine Grace, we should lose no time in setting about the great work of Conversion: We should make haste, and prolong not the time, as the *Psalmist* speaks, to keep his Commandments.—This is a lesson that more immediately concerns those Christians, who, by an extraordinary call, have been roused into a serious frame of mind: Those also who, after Confirmation, or the Lord's

¹ Prov. xxix. 1.

Supper, or any eminent crisis of Sickness or Danger, have been awakened and stirred up to renew their holy Vows and Resolutions: These should do as the *Israelites* did; not stay for any worldly considerations or conveniencies, but go as they are, leave *Egypt* as soon as possible; not staying to leaven, or even bake their bread: All Delays, in such case, are dangerous.

—Take with us we may, our *dough* and *kneading-troughs*; that is, the necessary Accommodations of life; as they did; but no more than we can conveniently carry; nothing to overload or encumber us too much. Nay, *jewels of silver*, and *jewels of gold*, if justly acquired, if Deodands, or Gifts of God, we may take: But then, we are to look upon them as things *lent* and *borrowed*; not as Perpetuities, not as our Own, but as things to be restored, when our common Lord, and sovereign Proprietor, shall demand them back; or to be employed, when required, to his use and service.—Baptismal grace, or the spirit of Christianity, obliges us not only to renounce the Devil (that spiritual *Pharaoh*) and all his works, but the whole world; nay, our very selves; even to quit all Propriety whatsoever; to give all for all; all we have, and all we are, for Heaven; to count all things loss and dung, that we may win Christ.—And happy he that makes, and keeps to, such a bargain!

Rameses, or, as others call

37. *And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, besides children.*

38. *And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle.*

39. *And they baked un-*

it, *Raamses*, was a city in that part of *Egypt*, where the *Israelites* were first placed (see *Gen.* xlvii. 11.); but in *Exod.* i. it is said to be built by the *Israelites*; that is, was either new built, or much enlarged, when they were increased to so great a multitude: Here they rendezvoused on their departure from

leavened cakes of the dough, which they had brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

from Egypt. And their thus leaving the Cities they had built, as well as their furnaces and bricks, may not unaptly remind us again, that we are to forsake all our own Works, when we set out for the heavenly Canaan.

Their next encampment was at *Succoth*, which signifies Booths, or Tabernacles; the place was so called from their making themselves booths of the boughs of the trees, which they found there. In perpetual memory hereof, God was pleased to institute the Feast of Tabernacles, which was to be kept in *Israel* every year: See *Levit. xxiii.*—The mystical design of which Institution was, to admonish us, that here we have no abiding city, but seek one to come: That we are Pilgrims and Sojourners in this Life: That our Home is Above: That thitherward we ought to bend our course, and on that blessed place set all our affections and desires, as the *Israelites* did on the land of *Canaan*, towards which place they were bound, and had now begun their journey.

40. Now the sojourning of the children of *Israel*, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

41. And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

42. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD, for bringing them

Most of the Chronologers compute these four hundred and thirty years from the call of *Abraham* out of *Haran*. But how will this reckoning agree with what God said to *Abraham*, in so express a manner? “Know of a surety
“that thy seed shall be a
“stranger in a land that is
“not theirs, and they shall
“serve them, and they shall
“afflict them four hundred
“years (*Gen. xv. 13.*)” And again,

*out from the land of Egypt: again, what is said in this
this is that night of the our Lesson, That at the end
LORD to be observed of of the four hundred and thir-
all the children of Israel, in ty years, even the self-same
their generations. day it came to pass, that all
the hosts of the LORD went*

*out from the land of Egypt; which seems to affirm,
that the Israelites went out of Egypt, on the very day
that completed that number of four hundred and
thirty years after their coming thither; and that
they staid not a day longer.—The manner, in which
this event is related [that it was the SELF-SAME day,
&c.], with the special remark [that it was much to be
observed], appears, at first sight, to imply a literal
and precise completion of that Promise.—But as this,
through the great diversity of expositors, is one of
the places of Scripture hard to be understood, or
reconciled with the same account, in other places;
let us content ourselves with this firm persuasion,
That God is true, but every man a liar; *i. e.* fallible,
and liable to mistake:—That all propositions, de-
livered in holy writ, which more immediately con-
cern our Salvation, are not only unquestionably true,
but easy to be understood by every sincere and
honest inquirer: That all historical facts recorded
therein are likewise as certainly true; but the Time
or Circumstances of the action may be too hard for
men of the acuteſt parts, or the ableſt critics, to ex-
plain.—And perhaps it was the will of God, to draw
a veil of obscurity over ſuch things, on purpoſe to
check the vain Curioſity of mankind, who are com-
monly more ſollicitous to ſearch into theſe critical
and leſs neceſſary truths, than thoſe which moſt con-
cern.—Referring therefore to the following Anno-
tation at the end of the Leſſon, which may give ſome
ſmall light to this Chronological Difficulty; though
it may not perfectly clear it up, or reconcile diſputes,
let us humbly acquieſce in that wiſe and pious maxim
of our Lord, “ It is not for us to know the Times,
“ or*

“ or the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his
“ own power ^k. ”

43. *And the LORD said unto Moses, and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover; there shall no stranger eat thereof.*

44. *But every mans servant that is bought with money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.*

45. *A foreigner, and an hired servant, shall not eat thereof.*

46. *In one house shall it be eaten, thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof.*

47. *All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.*

48. *And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near, and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

self may judge in this case. Howbeit, under the Law, God thought fit to give this prohibition the sanction of a special Command; and the more strong-

This is added to advertise us, that as no uncircumcised person was qualified to partake of the *passover*, so no one, that is unbaptized, is entitled to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The reason is the same in both cases, even because the Covenant is the same, both under the Law, and under the Gospel: The Seal only is altered, the Substance remains: It was then sealed by Circumcision; and now, by Baptism. Nor can it, in reason, be thought lawful for one, who is not yet in covenant with God, to come to his table; for one, who is not yet a Member of Christ the Head, to be admitted as a member of his Body the Church; for a stranger and foreigner, yea, not only a stranger and foreigner, but an Enemy, a child of wrath, and still under the sentence of Condemnation, to be received as a Friend, as a Child, as an Heir, to the Supper of the Lamb, the Feast of Love.—Reason it-

^k Acts i. 7.

ly to enforce it, charges both *Moses* and *Aaron*, *i. e.* both the civil and ecclesiastical Magistrates, with the strict observance of this Canon, that no Uncircumcised person whatsoever should ever be suffered to eat of the Passover.—As to the *Jews*, there could be no room for any doubt, or dispute, concerning the visible token or seal of their covenant in Circumcision; nor do we hear there ever was any difference, or dispute, amongst them, about the Matter or Form of that Sacrament.—Among Christians indeed, in these latter times, some unhappy Controversies have been raised, not only concerning the Manner and Form of administration, and even concerning the proper and authentic Minister of Baptism; but the Matter or visible sign, yea, the very Use and Necessity of this initial Sacrament, hath been called in question, and denied.—But every considerate person, who hath attained so much insight into the nature and design of the Christian Religion, as to look upon Baptism in the same light, as the *Jew* did upon Circumcision; namely, as the instituted Rite or Means of entering into Covenant with God; he will readily conclude with the Apostle, “It is that divine Instrument, and sacred Deed, by which we are now saved” (*i. e.* put into a salvable state).—And as to Circumstantials, particularly in relation to the proper Administrators of this Sacrament, one may reasonably suppose, that every wise man will conceive it the *safest* course, to receive it from the hands of those, whom the Laws and Customs of our National established Church have appointed and ordained for that purpose.—Whatever learned men have disputed, concerning the validity, or invalidity, of certain baptisms, it appears sufficient for every private and plain Christian; First, To observe, that Baptism, in itself, is an essential Principle of the doctrine of Christ, because it is a positive Institution of his: And next, to take notice, that the same Authority, which ap-

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 21.

pointed this Sacrament, appointed also the proper *Administrators* of it. For it was to the Apostles only, that he delivered the Commission.—Nothing can be more evident than this: For to Them only, and their Successors, was the charge directed,—“As my Father sent me, so send I You:—Go YE there—fore and baptize, &c.”

49. *One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.*

By the *home-born* are meant the native *Israelites*, such as St. Paul styles himself, “an *Hebrew of the Hebrews*,” that is, a *Jew* by family and descent. These, being born under the Law, were bound by the law, to fulfil it in every part.—By the *stranger*, who chose to sojourn among the *Jews*, and was desirous to be of their Communion, are to be understood such as were afterwards called *Profelytes*, or *Converts* to their Religion. Of these *Converts* there were two sorts, *profelytes of the Gate*, and *profelytes of Righteousness*: The first sort, professing their Faith in the One GOD, the God of *Israel*, but not receiving the rite of Circumcision, were admitted no farther than the Outer Court of the Temple, which was called the court of the *Gentiles*; they were permitted to come no nearer than the Gate of the inner court: Hence they came to be commonly called *Profelytes of the Gate*.—The other *Profelytes*, who received Circumcision, were admitted to equal Privileges with the native *Jews*; and were therefore under equal obligations to fulfil all righteousness; that is to say, to conform to All the injunctions and ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*, as perfect members of the *Jewish Church*; or, as St. Paul expresses it, “As many as were circumcised became debtors to do the whole law^m.” And from hence all such were called the *profelytes of Righteousness*.—In this case, *one law*

^m Gal. v. 3.

was to all, both the *home-born* and *stranger*.—And, if we bring home the reflection to ourselves, how happy were it, if all that sojourn within the pale of our Church, who profess to believe in the same God and Saviour, would attend to the instruction contained in this verse; namely, that it appears to be the will of God, that the *law* both for Them, and the professed members of our holy Church, *is*, and should be, but *One*!—As there is but One Faith, and One Lord, so there is but One Baptism for entering Us, who are the *Home-born*, and Them, who as yet are Strangers and Sojourners, into the privileges and blessings of the Christian Covenant; even that Baptism, which was ordained of Christ, and is administered by those, who have Authority from him to admit into his vineyard.—And we all profess, in our *Nicene Creed*, to acknowledge but *One baptism for the remission of sins*.

As by this Sacrament, so
 50. *Thus did all the* received, we are made the
children of Israel; as the children of God, and *Israelites*
LORD commanded Moses indeed; so the sure mark,
and Aaron, so did they. whereby such are known and
 distinguished, is their con-

formity to the Rules and Orders of the Church.—
 The true *children of Israel* will ever do *as the Lord*
commands them.—The laws of the Church and State
 are the fixed and standing rule of their Obedience.—
 As the Lord hath *commanded Moses and Aaron, so do*
they.

Genesis (the title of the
 51. *And it came to pass* first book of *Moses*) import-
the self-same day, that the ing Creation; and *Exodus*
LORD did bring the chil- (the name of this second
dren of Israel out of the land book) signifying Departure;
of Egypt, by their armies. by the first is suggested to
 us the manner of our first

Existence, or coming Into the world; by the latter,
 our exit, or going Out of it.—These two events, our
 first Beginning, and our last End, are of the greatest
 im-

importance, frequently and seriously to consider; to wit, that, seeing we are come into the world (a wicked world, of which *Egypt* was a most expressive emblem), here we are not to continue; which, to a good man, is matter of Comfort; but must depart, when God is pleased to command; which is a warning to all, to be constantly prepared.—But, whereas the Church at this time, and on this solemn Day especially, calls upon us to commemorate the RESURRECTION of *Christ*, and, in consequence thereof, to expect and meditate on our Own; the use most suitable to the Occasion, is not so much to dwell on the thought of our Departure out of this present mortal state by the issues of Death, as to extend our prospect to that more glorious *Exodus*, when the Lord *Jesus*, the God and captain of our Salvation, shall bring forth his People by their armies, even out of the gloomy regions of the Grave; nor leave an hoof, not the least particle of our being, behind.—To which happy *Exodus*, and most glorious exit, God of his infinite mercy bring us all, through the same *Jesus Christ* our Lord, Amen! *Da bonum finem: da felicem ex hoc mundo exitum! Kempis.*

Ver. 40. *Four hundred and thirty years.*] It may not seem improbable, what some commentators have offered to reconcile the different calculations; That in computing the years of the *Israelites* sojourning in *Egypt*, which is here said to be four hundred and thirty years, there is some omission in the account which *Moses* hath given of the Pedigrees.—According to the genealogy he gives of *Levi*, there are indeed but two generations mentioned; viz. *Cokath* and *Amram*; but in the pedigree of *Judab*, four generations are counted after their coming into *Egypt*; namely, *Hexron*, the son of *Pharez*, *Ram*, *Abinadab*, and *Nasbon*. Compare 1 *Chron.* ii. 9, 10. with *Numb.* i. 7. where it appears, that *Nasbon* was the prince of that tribe, when all the *Israelites* were numbered two months after they left *Egypt*: So that, however it might happen in the pedigree of *Levi*, or of the other tribes, it seems plain, that in *Judab's* family (which was the chief tribe) four generations were completed in their *Egyptian* servitude, as God had foretold, *Gen.* xv. 16. That in the fourth generation they should come out. And consequently this makes it probable, that the four hundred years were fully completed

pleted after their coming into *Egypt*, according to what God had foretold to *Abraham*; "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years." This agrees exactly with what *St. Stephen* saith, *Acts* vii. 6.—But this *land* cannot well be meant of the land of *Canaan*, because of the donation which God had given to *Abraham*, and his posterity, to inherit it; and so could not properly be called a *land which was not theirs*.—Howbeit, this doth not so clearly reconcile the Chronology of this passage, as not to admit of exceptions, especially if we advert to what *St. Paul* hath said, *Gal.* iii. which seems to intimate, that the four hundred and thirty years began from the time of God's promise made to *Abraham*.

If we take this passage, and calculation, in another light, and consider the four hundred, or four hundred and thirty years, as a prophetic type and emblem of the sufferings of the Christian Church, and its deliverance from persecution, the two periods will very nearly correspond. The persecution lasted about four hundred years, and ended in the time of *Constantine*.—If we take in the time of our Saviour, it will make up the four hundred and thirty years. But this, as a singular thought, is submitted to better judges.





E A S T E R - D A Y.

Second Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

ROMANS, Chap. vi.

The application and use which we ought to make of the doctrine of Christ's Resurrection, is a death unto Sin, and a new life unto Righteousness. In order to this, we are taught in this Lesson, what is the Principle, the Effects and Properties, of the new and spiritual Life; what its proper action and exercise; and what its final Issue and Reward.

1. *WHAT shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?*

2. *God forbid: how shall we that are dead^a to sin, live any longer therein?*

THIS chapter hath an immediate connexion with the conclusion of the foregoing; which ending thus [“The law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord”]. The apostle, in the be-

^a Greek, *have died*; to wit, when we were baptized.

ginning of this chapter first guards against a mistaken notion, which some might entertain, and some of the antient opposers of Christianity did; yea, some of its modern professors have entertained; as if the Christian religion encouraged *sin* by this doctrine of the superabounding power of grace over sin; and he checks it with a *God forbid*, as an opinion quite contrary to his meaning, and to the nature and design of grace. From hence he takes occasion to explain the doctrine of the spiritual life, as the strongest argument against continuing in a state of sin; urging it as a thing most preposterous and absurd in a Christian, who in baptism had received that divine principle for the purposes of grace, and professedly engaged to die unto sin, that he should, nevertheless, allow himself to *live any longer therein*.

Here Christians are there-

3. *Know ye not, that so many of us as^b were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?*

fore called upon to remember the solemn vow they had made in baptism, with all the sacred engagements they were laid under, as well as

benefits they had received, when they were made members of Christ, and children of God: How they were then so united to Christ, as to be baptized *into* him, to be made one with him, and he with us; and, in virtue of this most intimate union, to become partakers of his Spirit; or, as St. *Peter* expresses it, made partakers of the divine nature^c:” And as this divine union with Christ is the true source of our spiritual life; so it necessarily, and clearly, implies the consequent obligation of our dying unto sin; that being meant by our being baptized into His *death*.

—The death of Christ was not only a death for our sins, but *to* all manner of sin whatsoever: It was a death manifestly intended not only to expiate for, but to destroy, sin in all its members: For this very end

^b *Greek*, have been baptized.

^c 2 *Pet.* i.

was he called JESUS, that he might “ save his people “ *from their sins* ;”—from sin itself, as well as from the guilt and pollution of it.

4. *Therefore we are ^a buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

5. *For if we have been planted together, in the likeness of his death: we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

again, after his death and burial, to a new and heavenly life; so also should we (as was likewise figured by emersion, and rising again out of the water); that so we may be like him in both respects, and resemble him, as our catechism also teaches, by “ a death unto “ sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.”

6. *Knowing this, that our old man is ^a crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

none will be saved, but such only as cease to *serve sin*.—A great mystery this! which yet the apostle mentions as a thing *well known*.—Alas! how few is this Christian truth known to, now-a-days; because not considered, nor sufficiently attended to!

^a Were we.
he was crucified.

^a Greek, *hath been*; i. e. *was crucified when*

Another argument for preserving and cherishing the spiritual life, and eschewing sin, is taken from the resurrection of Christ: That as he died unto sin, and was buried; so also should we observe a conformity to him our head; not only *die*, but also be *buried* with him; as was wont to be expressed by that significant ceremony in the primitive times of being plunged under the water in baptism.—And as he *rose*

All mankind was in *Jesus Christ* upon the cross, and died thereon *with him*, because he supplied their place as their security and victim. Thus all men were redeemed, and put into a state and capacity of salvation:—Yet

7. *For he that is dead^f,
is freed from sin.*

This argument is taken from the nature and consequence of death. Death naturally puts an end to all our actions, and, consequently, to all further overt acts of sin. It must, therefore, appear monstrous, and contrary to the very course of nature, for him that *is dead*, to serve sin; dead men, how great slaves soever during life, being manumitted, and set free from the commands and service of their master: And if this be the case in the order of nature, how much more should it hold good in the order of grace?

8. *Now if we be dead^g
with Christ, we believe that
we shall also live with him:*

He now comes to the properties and acts of the spiritual and new life: That if, indeed, *we died* with Christ; that is, if, in our baptism, we *so* died to sin, as he did upon the cross; yea, *so* ceased from it, as that the heart and senses have no more life or inclination for the acts of sin, than a dead man hath for the things of the world; then we may *believe*, and be fully assured, that we shall also live with him in glory:—So live with him, by the spiritual life, in this world, that we shall finally enjoy, with him, the life eternal hereafter.

9. *Knowing that Christ,
being raised^h from the dead,
dieth no more; death hath no
more dominion over him.*

The natural life is mortal, and ceases in death; but the spiritual life is eternal, and never dies; because it is the life of Christ; being that life, whereof he is now possessed since his *having been raised from the dead*, and which he dispenses to all his members: Wherefore, although he died once, yet, as he never shall die any more, *death hath no more dominion over him*; even so, if we continue in him, and our life be hid with

^f Greek, ἀποθανών, hath died. ^g If we died [to wit, with Christ] when he died; as was represented in baptism. See ver. 5.

^h Having been raised, ἐγερθείς.

Christ in God, neither shall death have any more dominion over us. Whatever power the natural death may have over our natural life (as it had over him to cause him to die *once*); yet the spiritual death, which was the penalty, and most mortal sting of man's transgression, shall never prevail against our spiritual life, while we abide in him.—The sentence of [dying, thou shalt die¹], which was passed upon *Adam*, is now reversed in Christ, to, dying, thou shalt not die—but live.

And so should it be with us. When *once* we have died unto sin, and revived again, as we did in our baptism, we should not die any more, but *live unto God*, as he doth.

Our spiritual ought to resemble his temporal death, and be succeeded by a new spiritual, and never ending life, as his is.

11. *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord^k.*

A Christian, having, by solemn vow, renounced the world, and the things of the world, should *reckon* himself as one who is not of the world; as one dead to all the pomps and vanities of it; *dead* indeed unto sin, and *living* only to God; but still remembering, that he holds this life *in* Christ; that he lives and moves, and has his spiritual being, by the faith of the Son of God:—All his actions must be the actions of this divine life; having the Spirit of Jesus Christ for their principle, and God for their end; *living wholly unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord*.

12. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

The true symptom, and most genuine exercise of the spiritual life, is, that it should command and govern all the actions of the

¹ Gen. ii.
τῷ Θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ.

^k But living unto God in Jesus Christ, ζῶντες ἐν

13. *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

body. The outward, as well as inward man, must be subject to its influence.—The body itself is not only *mortal*, but hath many lusts and appetites, which minister fuel and incentives to sin: So that the best of men, while they are in this *mortal* state,

are not free from many sinful and irregular passions. The apostle, therefore, in regard to these natural disorders and infirmities, which, in the sight of a just and holy God, are real sins, does not absolutely forbid all sin; but only recommends to us so to keep such sinful appetites under the command of reason and religion, as not to let them *reign* in our *mortal bodies*; not to yield to them, not to *obey* them. Much less should the Christian yield any *member* of his body to perpetrate any overt or wilful act of sin, as an *instrument of unrighteousness*; but rather dedicate every member and part of his body to the service of God. Hence also we may observe, for our comfort, that the disorderly motions to which these bodies are subject, are not incompatible with the spiritual life, and a state of grace.

14. *For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

These kinds of sin are permitted to dwell in us; but they shall not prevail against the spiritual life, nor hurt us mortally, except we suffer them to *reign*, and get the dominion over us. The reason given [because we are *not under the law, but under grace*] is a further comfort and encouragement.—The *law*, by which is meant the first covenant, the covenant of works, and which, as such, was imposed upon the *Jews*, was a yoke which none could bear. This law gave the knowledge of sin, but provided no remedy; it shewed judgment, but not mercy: Whereas the second, or

gospel-covenant, is GRACE itself, a free gift, not only of pardon and peace, but of help and strength to recover us from the power, as well as guilt, of sin; by repentance putting a stop to the *dominion* and mortal effects of it; and, by faith, applying a sure and sovereign remedy to extirpate and destroy it.

15. *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.*

He reminds us again of the great absurdity of such behaviour, in a Christian; that it is not only inconsistent with his baptismal engagements, but is also the most ungenerous proceeding towards God. What? to offend against him, *because* he hath been so gracious; *because* he hath relieved us from the insupportable burden of the law? This absurd, as well as ungrateful conduct, of some Christians, he had taxed before, ver. 1. and repeats it as a thing no less contrary to common sense, than to the nature and ends of divine grace.— And it is to be noted, that WE, in this place, and in ver. 1. and, indeed, throughout this chapter, carries a strong emphasis, meaning us CHRISTIANS in particular, the covenanted servants of Christ, and the now elect people of God, in room of the *Jews*, who were rejected.

16. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

17. *But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

The apostle proceeds to argue from the principles of reason and common sense; and, to shew the reasonableness, as well as duty, of living up to the maxims and rules of the spiritual life, *Know ye not*, saith he, &c. *i. e.* nothing can be plainer than this noted and self-evident truth, that he who pays obedience to another, is *servant* to that person to whom he obeys. Apply this common

18. *Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*

19. *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have [formerly] yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.*

plain and intelligible to the meanest capacity; yet few, very few, Christians, understand, or heed whether they be the slaves of sin, or the servants of righteousness; consequently, whether they have the spiritual life or not.—Nothing is of greater concern to us; yea, nothing easier to be known; and yet, of all things that concern us, there is nothing that Christians themselves are generally more ignorant of, than their spiritual state, and the life of grace.

20. *For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness¹.*

21. *What fruit had ye then^m in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.*

22. *But now beingⁿ made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have*

mon observation to the general tenour of mens lives, whether in the practice of vice or virtue, it will be easy to discern by the different character they bear, whose servants they are, whether of sin, or of righteousness; of God, or the devil. The conclusion is plain and evident. And yet such is the infirmity of our flesh, that altho' the apostle speaks here *after the manner of men*, in words

Vice and virtue are here represented (as they have all along in our chapter) as two persons, contending which of them shall have man for their servant. It is plain, by the account, that man has no absolute freedom of his own; he is born to obey: All that his will is free to, is a liberty to choose his master, seeing he cannot be

¹ Greek, Free to righteousness, ἐλεύθεροι ᾗτε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ.

^m Greek, What fruit therefore had you—τίνα ἔν καρπόν.

ⁿ Greek, having been.

your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

his own. If he get free from *sin*, he becomes the servant of *righteousness*; if he be freed from righteousness, he instantly returns to his first slavery, the service of *sin*. One or other he must be contented to obey: If so, how foolish must it be, to choose a state of servitude, whose *fruit* or gain is nothing worth! yea, much more so, where every act of service is *shameful* in this life, and the *end* eternal *death*! Whereas, by relinquishing the vile drudgery of *sin* for the service of virtue, we commence immediately the *servants of God*; *have our fruit unto that holiness*, which fits and prepares for heaven; and then crowns all our short labours here with *life* and joy *everlasting*.

23. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

He that serves is intitled to *wages*: But there is this remarkable difference between the servant of *sin*, and the servant of *righteousness*. The first hath *wages* due to him; but those wages is *death*, temporal and eternal; —miserable wages, for a miserable service! Whereas, he that serves God, and faithfully acquits himself in all the offices of righteousness committed to his charge, hath indeed, properly speaking, no demand for *wages*, because the service itself is a reward; it is, therefore, called by the apostle, not *wages*, but a *GIFT of God*. Every grace, whereby we perform any act of duty to him, in the way of righteousness, is his *gift*, and is in itself a rich recompence, that overpays our best performances: Yea, the service of God is perfect freedom.—To be freed from the slavery of *sin*, is a glorious liberty, the glorious liberty of the children of God; making us no longer servants, but children, whose reward, we know, is not properly *wages*, but a *gift*. The first *gift* we receive is the spiritual life, the ope-

• Greek, In Christ Jesus.

rations of which are all the works of virtue and piety : The second *gift* (whereof the first is but the pledge and earnest) is *life eternal*; which consummates and crowns all with glory and immortality. Righteousness, or virtue, is the gift of mercy, and the effect of grace. But *eternal life* is a superabundant donative, infinitely more than we can possibly earn or deserve; and therefore is *given* us, not for our own sakes, but for the sake of *Christ Jesus* our Lord, whose merit alone hath purchased it for us. But this acquisition ought rather to humble than puff us up; seeing the merit and title itself is but a *gift*; is not our own, but another's.

Ver. 1. *What shall we say then?*] The Greek $\tauὶ ἔν ἰσχύμιν$, may be rendred, *What say we then*, as Dr. Hammond and Grotius observe. *Quid ergo est quod dicimus?* (So Grotius) And Passor, allows, that ἰσχύμιν is often taken in the *present*, as well as future tense: And then it answers to the objection raised in the preceding chapter, ver. 20. where the apostle had said,—*Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound*.—As this admitted of an objection, he now proceeds to explain his meaning; by saying,—*What is it then that we say? Do we say or mean, that we should continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid, &c.*

Ver. 20. *Ye were free from righteousness.*] The Greek $\text{ἐλευθεροὶ ἦτε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ}$, if literally translated, is, *Ye were free to righteousness*. And if this be the true rendring (as it appears to be, according to grammatical truth), it plainly implies, that men, while they are in a state of nature, and, during that state, the *servants of sin* [$\text{ὅτι ἦτε δούλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας}$, as the apostle words it], yet even then are they free and at liberty to choose righteousness: So that it plainly contains the doctrine of FREE WILL, agreeable to the sense of our own church, and the doctrine of the primitive Fathers. This is further explained in the note on this passage, in our exposition of the epistle to the *Romans*, now in MS.



E A S T E R - D A Y.

First Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

E X O D U S, Chap. xiv.

*The passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea :
The Egyptians, pursuing them, are drowned.*

After reading the Lesson.

THE literal sense of this extraordinary History is obvious enough to every Christian and intelligent reader. But the choice our Church hath made thereof for one of her Lessons on this great Festival of our Lord's Resurrection, calls upon us to enter within the veil; and to penetrate through the letter into a sense that more nearly concern us, as well as bears a suitable propriety to this solemn occasion. This, doubtless, is not so much the literal, as the spiritual and mystical, meaning. Now, if we attend to the Mystery contained herein, we shall observe two scenes which offer themselves to our meditation, of no small use and importance. The one represents in a figure (as St. Paul hath also intimated to us ^a) our Deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan by the waters of Baptism, and the consequent

^a 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

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separation of the Christian Church from the wicked world, which we then renounce. The waters of the *Red Sea*, which brought Salvation and Deliverance to *Israel*, and Perdition to their enemies, is a lively emblem of the one; the cloud, which first led the way, and then interposed between the redeemed, and their pursuers, as aptly signifies the other.—The second part of our lesson refers more immediately to *Christ*; and typifies to us the conquest of our Lord over the powers of Darknes, when, after his Crucifixion, and departure out of this life, he descended into hell.

As to the First, the parallel is so plain in all its parts, as to require only a serious attention, to make the application.—Nor let our modern contemnners of Allegory divert the pious Contemplative from drawing the parallel which our Church intended.—That the passage of the children of *Israel* through the *Red Sea* prefigured the Christian Baptism, we have the great Apostle's warrant and authority for it: "Brethren, saith he, I would not have you ignorant" (consequently this must be a consideration of no small concern), "that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto *Moses* in the cloud, and in the sea."—And that our Church had this Mystery in view, admits of little doubt; because this season of *Easter* was antiently the stated and most considerable Time for public Baptism.—Moreover, as Baptism represents to us our Profession, nothing could be more seasonable than to be called upon, on the Day of our Lord's Resurrection, to that Newness of life, which Baptism confers and represents. To inculcate and enforce this first principle of the doctrine of Christ, the same instruction was propounded to us in our Second Lesson for the morning service^b; and is here again repeated;

^b *Rom. vi.*

with manifest design to excite and engage our attention to the use and benefits of Baptism.

The other Mystery contained in our Lesson, which hath an aspect to our Lord's Descent and Victory over Hell, is indeed more obscure, because not sufficiently, or so generally, considered as it deserves. But, from the whole tenour of yesterday's service, according to the explication, and plain purport, of the Scriptures then appointed to be read to us, we cannot but presume, that this was one of the motives which induced the Church to choose our present Lesson for part of this Day's instruction. For this reason, let us chiefly turn our thoughts, at this time, from the contemplation of that seemingly lowest act of our Lord's humiliation, namely, his descent into Hell (the belief of which article of our creed was confirmed by the Scriptures of yesterday's service), to the happy Consequences of that descent, and the glorious Triumph he obtained over our infernal enemies, which we this day celebrate^c.

His Passion, as typified by the slaying of the paschal Lamb, hath been represented to us in our Morning Lesson^d; and the Gospel-history has related the accomplishment of it in his Own Person. The virtue of that Blood gave efficacy to all that he afterwards did.—As it proved salutary to his people, both in the figure, and the substance; so it proved destructive to his enemies.—And now (his sufferings being over, and all “finished^e”), we may say with *Moses* in his Song, “Our Lord became a MAN OF WAR^f.” He mustered his army against the enemy of souls; he

^c Which we this day celebrate.] The lvii. Psalm, which the church hath chosen for one of her proper Psalms for this day, is a kind of *Epinikion*, or triumphant hymn, which our Lord sang; and his church appoints to be sung upon this day, for his victory over the powers of darkness, when he descended into those regions, and rose again. Many of the expressions point to this sense. See ver.

3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

^d Exod. xii.

^e John xix. 30.

^f Exod. xv. 3.

descended into his dominions, the deep of the earth, as his people did into the deep of the sea; and there "triumphed gloriously" over him, and his host; by this victory shewing his Church the manner and certainty of that conquest over hell itself, and all the powers of sin and death, which at our Resurrection we also shall obtain.

As the children of *Israel* were thrust out of *Egypt*, and were not allowed to tarry; so was the holy *Jesus* thrust out of the world by a violent death. Then it was, even at the juncture of his Passion, and while he was passing through the *Red Sea* of his own blood, that we may suppose, the infernal *Pharaoh*, with all his host, pursued after him. This was their hour, and power of darkness, as our Lord himself acknowledged it^s.—Now they think him *entangled* (as the *Egyptians* thought the *Israelites*), that he could not escape. The enemy said, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied; I will draw my sword; my hand shall destroy them."—But what says the church in her triumphant hymn? "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters."

Again, if we consider the *Israelites* in the midst of the deep, and their enemies in pursuit; herein they may not unaptly represent that part of our Lord's people, who had departed this life, and were now in [*Hades*] the invisible state. But behold he comes down^h (as he elsewhere emphatically expresses himself) to "deliver them also out of the hand of their enemies, and to bring them out of that land of darkness, into a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey;" that is to say, Christ descended into those lower parts of the earth to rescue them from the power and dominions of Satan into a place of liberty, the regions of bliss and glory; to the strong-hold, as *Zechariah* calls it; and saying

^s *Luke* xxii. 53.

^h *Exod.* iii. 8.

to them, as the prophet's words are, "Turn ye to
"the strong-hold, ye prisoners of hope," chap. ix.
ver. 12.; so leading captivity captive, according to
that strong and beautiful expression of the Psalmist,
Pf. lxxviii. as cited from *Deborah's* song, *Judg. v. 12.*

Again, on the *Israelites* departure from *Egypt*, it is
said, they were not led the direct and nearest way to
Canaan, but by *Phibabiroth*, a place of streights (for
so in the *Hebrew* it signifies); that they were shut in
with the wilderness and rocks on either side, *Pharaob*,
and his host, behind them, and the *Red Sea* (that
emblem of eternity, and gulf unpassable) before them.
So from sundry passages in the Holy Scriptures we
are led to conceive, that the souls even of good men,
which departed before our Lord's coming and resur-
rection, were not carried directly to Heaven, but to
that part of *Hades* which, by our Saviour, is called
Paradise, and *Abram's* bosom. For, as it is said,
in our *Te Deum*, "When thou hadst overcome the
"sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom
"of Heaven to all believers;" that is to say, not
before; not till then: So we may observe the same
sense is favoured by our Lord himself, when, even
after his resurrection, he told *Mary*, "He was not
"YET ascended to his Fatherⁱ;" that is, to that per-
fect state of bliss, which was in the immediate pre-
sence of God the Father: And likewise from what
St. Paul says of the Saints of the Old Testament;
That "although they had obtained a good report
"through faith, they had not received the promise,
"God having provided some better thing for us, that
"they without us should not be made perfect^k."—
May we not then very reasonably presume, that this
was the state of the deadⁱ (to wit, before our Lord's
descent

ⁱ *John* xx. 17.

^k *Heb.* xi. 39, 40.

¹ *This was the state of the dead, &c.*] See this sentiment handled
by some of the best divines of our church.—*Bishop Bull* in his Ser-
mon 2. vol. I.—By *Sturmy* and *Staynoe*; and particularly by *bishop*
Taylor,

descent and resurrection); which in our creed, *Psalms*, &c. is called *Hades* or hell; and which, in our lesson, is represented by the depths of the sea?—Through these depths the *Israelites* passed, immured, as it were, within the walls of a prison; safe indeed under the divine protection, yet not without some sentiments of terror from the pursuit of their enemies.—Now, to make the emblem hold in all its parts, may we not conceive, that, although the ultimate design of our Lord's descent was to conquer the enemies of our salvation, yet the first great end of this mysterious dispensation, according to the reason and order of things, was to “preach to the spirits in prison;” according to the doctrine of *St. Peter*, as explained in our first proper lesson for morning prayer on *Easter Even*; where, having mentioned the death of *Christ*, the apostle immediately adds, as the very first thing he did consequential to the death of his body, That in his spirit [or soul] he went and preached to the spirits, or souls, of those who were then in prison?

But whereas he went thither, as one “stricken and “smitten of God^m; counted with them that go down “into the pit;—as a man that had no strength;— “like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more, and are cut off from thy hand; “—as one laid in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the “deeps;—as one shut up, and could not get forthⁿ.” Consequently, at first he might possibly seem to the enemy to be flying before them, as *Moses*, and the *Israelites*, did before *Pharaoh*:—The infernal host therefore, like that of *Pharaoh*, pursued him on his first descent, with all their forces. Possibly also, as before observed, the spirits he came to preach to, and whom he had now under his charge to rescue from

Taylor, in his funeral sermon for *Sir Geo. Dalston*; where he affirms, that this was the general opinion of the primitive fathers concerning the intermediate state.

^m *Is. liii.*

ⁿ *Pf. lxxxviii.*

their captivity, might conceive some fear (as the *Israelites* did) as being anxious for the success. But for their encouragement, as well as security, may we not further presume, that this great angel of God puts on his strength, exerts his divine power, and becomes “their salvation^o?” He now changes his station, and goes behind them, that is, between their enemies and them, to secure their rear, so that *the one should not come near the other all the night*.—At length, towards the morning-watch (for so the parallel corresponds very remarkably in point of Time, this answering to our Three of the clock in the morning, which was probably the precise time of our Lord’s Resurrection, and so generally believed), it is said, “the LORD looked unto the host of the *Egyptians*” “through the pillar of fire, and of the cloud^p; and” “troubled the host of the *Egyptians*; and took off” “their chariot-wheels, that they drave them heavily;” “so that the *Egyptians* said, Let us flee from the face” “of *Israel*; for the Lord fighteth for them against the” “*Egyptians*.”

In like manner, we may imagine the army of Satan, even the whole multitude of spirits accursed, were, at length, convinced of the divine power of *Christ*; that it was in vain to pursue him, and his army, any more; and therefore resolve to fly. But though they flee from the face of *Israel*, they are not suffered, no not one of them, to escape the infliction of divine vengeance.—In what manner this infliction was executed, is above the reach of human apprehension to conceive. But the victory our Lord obtained over Satan, was, doubtless, no less complete and absolute, than that which the same Lord gained over *Pharaoh*, and his host, in the midst of the sea. Thus the Son of God (as it was meet and right he should) hath subdued all things to himself. Heaven was his own: This, when there

^o Chap. xv. 2.

^p By the *pillar of fire*, our Lord’s Divinity; by the *cloud*, his humanity; was represented.

was war in Heaven, he had asserted, and maintained his title to, against the attempt of Satan and his angels:—Earth had revolted by joining with those apostate spirits in their rebellion, and was under a forfeiture to divine justice: To earth he came down, discharged the forfeiture, and regained it, by a plenary redemption: Hell still held out in the rebellion against him; hell also he descends into, and reduces by conquest; subduing Satan in his own territories, as he had before vanquished him in Heaven, and often upon earth: Then delivers out of his hands those souls, who, in life, had too much virtue to be eternally lost, but not goodness enough to intitle them to Heaven.—These, gladly receiving the good tidings and terms of salvation offered them by the Redeemer, were taken under his protection, rescued out of the house of bondage, and ascended with him to a place of safety; as the *Israelites* were brought by *Moses* out of the *Red Sea* upon firm land.

These transactions of our Lord in the invisible state, though offered with all humility as points rather speculative than real facts, may yet serve to give some light to that difficult passage in the history of our Lord's passion and resurrection, which we meet with in *St. Matt.* xxvii. ver. 52, 53. although perhaps the sentiment we have followed, may not appear to the reader to be fully confirmed thereby.—It is there said, that when *Jesus* had yielded up the ghost (at which instant it was, that his soul descended into hell;—to the spirits in prison, according to *St. Peter*; to the deep, according to *St. Paul*), behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.—All nature, we see, was put into a convulsion, especially the lowermost parts of the earth, into which he was descended.—Then follows what, we have presumed, was the consequence of this his descent thither, according to the foregoing exposition; the “graves were opened, and many bodies of saints, which slept, arose.”—These saints, we conceive,

were the first-fruits of his preaching and victory, the forerunners of his triumph, while he was securing the rear. For so it follows concerning these saints who had slept, "that they arose, and came out of their graves, AFTER his resurrection." Their graves were opened, and they awakened from their sleep of death, in virtue of their Lord's victory over death and hell; but still, in honour of his resurrection, they came not out of their graves, till *after* he himself was risen. Then it is expressly affirmed, "They went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."—I profess, I know not how to understand, or reconcile, these passages of Scripture, but on the hypothesis and belief of our Lord's local descent into hell, and according to the sense we have taken it in.

What makes many of our Protestant divines averse to this doctrine of our Lord's local descent, is, because, they think, it too much favours the *Romish* doctrine of purgatory. 'Tis true, the Romanists do borrow an argument for it from that very text in *St. Peter*; but, with how little reason, will easily appear, if it be considered, that whatever was then done, upon our Lord's descent, can never be done again. As he died but once, so he descended but once. Whatever spirits were then in that prison, and thence delivered on his preaching to them, and subduing their enemies, none others can ever, since that time, expect the same gaol-delivery; because the like conjuncture can never happen again. Besides, what at once confutes this *Popish* fancy, is the name of the place; for whatever place or state our Saviour descended into, it is expressly called hell, not purgatory: And to believe, that any souls are, or ever will be, delivered out of hell (according to the common acceptation of that name), is no more an article of the *Romish* creed, than it is of ours.

Another difficulty¹, which puzzles some well-meaning persons, is the notion they have conceived concern-

¹ See note at the end.

ing hell; that it necessarily implies a state of damnation and torment. This they apprehend to be a most unworthy supposal concerning our Lord's most innocent Soul; and abhor to think, that he should be cast into the place of the Damned, and there endure any part of the miseries and pains of Hell-fire.

But a little reflection would obviate this terrifying objection. Was not *Daniel* cast into the den of lions? yet the lions hurt him not:—Were not the three children thrown into the fiery furnace? yet an hair of their head was not singed; only their bands were burnt off: And a fourth like the Son of God came thither to bear them company, and to deliver them.—Both these instances are not only significant Types and Emblems of our Lord's Descent into hell, but, at the same time, shew, that he went not thither to Suffer, but to Triumph; yea, to Redeem. Therefore he was “free among the dead;” as the *Psalmist* speaks in the person of *Christ*.—And, as what hath been already cited out of that *Psalms*, doth strongly corroborate the belief of *Christ's* actual Descent into Hell, so the choice which our church hath made of that *Psalms* for one of her Proper *Psalms* on *Good Friday* (and that too for her Evening service, so as to correspond the more nearly with the precise Time of our Lord's Descent), is an undeniable argument, that this is her avowed Doctrine.—And her sense I shall ever venerate and prefer, as the best and surest standard of true Divinity.

As to the *spirits*, whom the Spirit or Soul of *Christ* preached to, in that prison; who they were, and why some were delivered, and others not; this Question has already been touched upon before (see preface to *Easter-Even's* Proper Lessons); to which we may further add, That if, according to *St. Paul's* distinction, there are Gentiles whose thoughts at the day of judgment will *accuse*, or else *excuse*, them (*i. e.* condemn

or acquit); and that therefore they will be judged by the law of Conscience only, and the rule of Natural Religion; we may reasonably conclude from hence, that such of those Prisoners we are speaking of, as had in life lived up to this law, and so stood excused by their own Conscience, were, doubtless, the persons whom Christ rescued from the Pit. These were Prisoners of Hope (as the Prophet calls them), having nothing to accuse themselves of, but the common Frailties of human nature, and invincible Ignorance. But as for those, who, in their life-time, had violated the known law and obligations of Conscience, and been guilty of notorious crimes, presumptuously, and wilfully, these, being justly condemned by their own Conscience, had no room for Hope, nor any title to a Deliverance, as being Wicked persons (which denotes not only an Habit, but a Delight in Sin), they were rejected, as unworthy; and, as the Psalmist expresses it, were “*turned*,” or more strongly, according to the *Hebrew**, were “*Returned*, into hell,” as vessels fitted for Destruction, and incapable of Mercy.

The Objection, that may be raised against this exposition from that saying of *St. Peter* concerning those, “*who were disobedient in the days of Noah*,” will admit of the same solution with the foregoing, concerning the state of the Gentiles;—for although *St. Peter* instances only in the case of the Antediluvian world, yet the condition of the Gentiles, before the coming of *Christ*, being the very same, the same Answer may serve, as was observed before.

But after all, and a great deal more, that might be urged in defence of this Opinion, I renounce all Self-confidence; and desire nothing, I have advanced, may have any greater weight than will be supported by the holy Word of God, and the doctrine and principles of our own most orthodox Church, as grounded

* *Jashubu, revertentur, Ps. ix. 17.*

on the Scriptures, and warranted thereby.—As I conceive it to be *her* opinion, I hold it sacred, and maintain it : Yea, from my heart, believe it to be true; because it plainly appears to be founded upon the authority of God's holy word.

^a *Another difficulty, &c.*] Those Calvinistical divines, who hold, That our Lord endured the pains of Hell, seem to mean it only of the Agony and Sorrow he felt in his Soul, during the time of his Passion; and therefore *before*, not *after*, his Death. And this we need not controvert, if we understand it as a part of his passion, and while the guilt of the whole World was laid upon him; of which the Psalmist, in the person of Christ, speaks, "The sorrows of hell compassed me round about, the snares of Death prevented me *." —But this, we say, was part of his Sufferings before he died, as was also his Agony, when his human Soul was made an offering for sin; whereas his descent into Hell being *after* his death, when he had fully satisfied all the demands of divine Justice, by the sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross, he could have no more to suffer. His Descent therefore into Hell was, as hath been observed, to conquer Satan in his own dominions, and to rescue his captives, the prisoners of hope.

* *Pf.* xviii. 5.





E A S T E R - D A Y .

Second Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

A c t s, Chap. ii. Ver. 22.

St. Peter's sermon on the resurrection of Christ.

After reading the Lesson.

WE have here *St. Peter's* sermon on Christ's resurrection. As this was the first that ever was preached in the Christian church, as well as the first on that occasion; so, for the importance of the subject, it was fittest, not only to be the first discourse, but that the chiefest of the sacred college should be appointed to be the preacher of it. The heads it consists of, are these three:

1. The reality of our Lord's resurrection.
2. The gracious design, and happy effects of it.
3. The instituted means, whereby all may become partakers of these blessed effects and benefits of it.—Then our lesson concludes with a specimen and model of that holy society, which constituted the original and purest exemplar of the Christian church.

First, In asserting the fact, and producing the proofs of our Lord's resurrection, *St. Peter* begins with the description of his person; That he, who rose from the dead, was the same, who had been commonly known and called by the name of *Jesus of Nazareth*.—But whereas it was necessary to exhibit him

him to them, as an object of their faith, as well as of their knowledge, he further describes him as a *man approved of God*; or rather more strongly, as well as more literally, according to the original ^a, *a man from God, made visible among you*; by which words he plainly points to his descent from heaven; and that he was sent down *from God*, even the express Messenger, as well as Son, of God: In a word, as St. Paul speaks, That he was “GOD manifest in the flesh ^b,” and proved so to be, by the miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of them! And for this he appeals to the evidence of their own senses, in these words, *As ye yourselves also know*.

Next he charges them with his death; and taxes them home, that they *had taken, and, by wicked hands, had crucified and slain him*:—Nevertheless, to obviate any despairing thoughts, that might arise for so wicked, so very heinous an action, he unfolds to them so much of the bright part of this great mystery, as might encourage their faith, and hopes of pardon; telling them, that although this wickedness was indeed very great, and wholly from themselves, yet, that Christ should so suffer, and die, was from the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*; God the Father having determined, before the foundations of the world, to deliver him up to suffer that painful ignominious death, for the sins of mankind; and that they had therefore been permitted to be the cruel instruments of it.

Then the apostle proceeds to relate and prove his RESURRECTION from the dead.—First, he affirms, *it was not possible* that Christ should *be holden* or detained by the *pains* (or rather, as Dr. Hammond renders it, by the *bands*) of *death*; not only, as he had intimated before, because he was the Son of God, but

^a Ἀνὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀποδείκνυσθαι εἰς ὑμᾶς. *Conspicuum vobis. Grot.*
A Deo demonstratum. Pasor.

^b 1 Tim. iii. 16.

because the Scriptures had expressly foretold, That God *would not leave his soul in hell* [i. e. in the state of the dead]; neither should his *flesh see corruption*; that is, remain so long in the grave, as to corrupt and moulder, as other bodies do. To enforce the application, he argues, that this, though spoken by *David*, and, as it were, in his own person, yet could not, in reason, be understood of *David*, because, as they all knew, *David* was both *dead and buried*, and so continued to be, his sepulchre being still to be seen amongst them: That therefore *David*, speaking as a prophet, spake it not of himself, but of the resurrection of *Christ*.

Having thus proved the necessity and certainty of *Christ's RESURRECTION*, both from reason and Scripture, he offers himself, and the rest of the apostles, as *witnesses* in evidence of the truth of the fact, in these words, *This Jesus* [this same person, whom ye crucified and slew] *bath God raised up, whereof we all are WITNESSES.*

Secondly, In setting forth the gracious design of our Lord's sufferings, and resurrection from the dead, he mentions one, as the chief end, and principal cause, of all the happy effects consequent thereupon; namely, the sending down the HOLY GHOST.—This includes all the other blessings conferred upon us by his incarnation, his holy life, and painful death, his resurrection and ascension. All was done to purchase for us the gift of the Holy Ghost: And when he had, by those acts of his mediatorial office, fitted and qualified us for receiving him, he then sent him down from heaven.—For the truth of this he appeals to themselves, as eye and ear witnesses of what had happened that very day (the day of *Pentecost*, when this sermon was preached to them) in these words, *This Jesus being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he bath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

This great and principal end and design of all that our Saviour has done for us, namely, the restoring
to

to man the gift of the Holy Ghost, not being sufficiently attended to, nor more generally explained in our systems of divinity, has thrown some obscurity on the mystery of our redemption; whence many errors and heresies have sprung up; and is the main cause, why the generality of Christians are so little sensible of the merits of Christ's passion, of the great love of God in sending him, and of the inestimable benefits of the Holy Spirit, which our Saviour has purchased and obtained to us by his death and resurrection. It would fill a large volume, and well deserves it, to unfold, in all its parts, this grand principle of our Christian faith. But having frequently touched upon it in other places, let it suffice here, with all possible brevity, to observe;

In the creation of man, God formed his body out of the earth; but his soul, of a spiritual substance; breathing into him, as from himself, a spirit capable of reason and understanding.—This completed his existence as man, and rendered him a most perfect creature, according to the scale of beings, wherein he was placed, between the animal and angelical order. But to make man happy, as well as perfect; happy in his state and condition, as well as perfect in his nature; God was pleased to bestow upon him a supernatural gift, even his own Holy Spirit.—This we may, with some good divines, understand by those words in *Gen. ii. 7. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*; that is, as the *Hebrew* may as well be rendered, the *SPIRIT of life*; which is no other, than the *HOLY GHOST*; who is, in the most proper sense, the *Spirit of life*; and whose peculiar character is, the *Giver of life*^c. This breath of God, or Divine Spirit, was breathed into man together with his natural soul or spirit; and then it is added, *Man became a living soul*; that is, this spiritual life, this life of the Spirit of God, being inspired by God himself into the soul,

^c Ζωοποιόν, as he is styled in our *Nicene Creed*.

became,

became, from that instant, the life of the soul ; even as the soul is the life of the body.

The complete happiness and perfection of man before his fall, consisted then in his having this Holy Spirit of God, as a principle of divine life, within him. By this he lived unto God, was united to him, and made partaker of the divine nature : So that, in virtue of this supernatural gift, *Adam* was not only perfectly happy in the state he then enjoyed, but endowed with those divine, and more than human powers, of wisdom and knowledge, whereby he understood the nature of all the creatures, so as to be able to give them names suitable to their respective species and natures. Hence also we may presume he derived that immortality, which even his body, and animal powers, would have partaken of, had he continued in the state of innocence ; as well as a visible glory, which cloathed him as with a robe of light ; even such a glory as our Lord was arrayed with in his transfiguration ; and such as shone in the face of *Moses*, when he descended from the mount.

But this life of the Holy Spirit, and this glory, he lost by sin ; and, in that respect, not only from that time became mortal, and subject to a temporal death, but, in a proper and true sense, *died* that very day to God. The union between God and him being rescinded on the breach of the divine law, he fell from the highest pitch of happiness to the lowest degree of misery ; and the penalty of his disobedience, which was included in that sentence, *Dying thou shalt die*^d, took immediate hold of him. We, indeed, have rendered it, *Thou shalt SURELY die* ; as if the reduplication of the words in the *Hebrew* language implied no more than such an asseveration in ours. But it imports a great deal more, even that double death above-mentioned ; *viz.* That man, by dying to God, and the loss of his spiritual life, should incur the fur-

^d So the original.

the death of nature; yea, that the death of nature should be succeeded by a further and eternal death of the soul, when separated from the body.

This then was the sad estate of man, by the forfeiture of God's Holy Spirit on his fall. And thus he must have remained for ever—dead in his trespass and sin, and for ever unable, as dead men are, to help himself, or to recover the life he lost.

Thirdly, To raise man again from death and misery, and to reunite him to God and happiness, could no way be effected, but by restoring to him that Divine Spirit which he had lost.—But into a wicked soul this Holy Spirit will not enter; nor dwell in a body defiled with sin.—Wherefore, to remove this impediment, *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, in tender love and compassion to lost mankind, undertook, by his own most precious bloodshedding, not only to satisfy and atone the justice of God, but to cleanse and fit man for the reception and inhabitation of the Blessed Spirit of God; which, for that reason, the apostle calls, “The renewing of the Holy Ghost.”—On condition of this all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, which was to be offered in the fulness of time, God the Father was pleased to promise, that he would again give his Spirit to man.—Hence this blessed gift is here by the apostle, and elsewhere, called the PROMISE of the Father, and the *Holy Spirit of PROMISE*.

To make good this promise, was the great end and design of Christ's coming into the world, as we before observed, and of all he did, suffered, and taught: It was to make us holy; *i. e.* to restore to us the Holy Spirit of God, that we might be so.—And all the institutions of the gospel point to the same end; first, as means of grace, to sanctify and make us holy; next, to preserve and keep us so. The sacrament of baptism washes and prepares us for receiving this Spirit of holiness; that so he may be WITH us: In confir-

* *Titus* iii. 5.

mation he is given in a fuller measure, that he may be *IN* us^f; and thereby make these very bodies of ours his temples to dwell in: By the Lord's Supper, and all the other means of grace, as reading, prayer, fastings, &c. the fruits of the Holy Ghost are improved and strengthened; that so, by degrees, we may be made fit for heaven, and the beatific vision; because, "without holiness, no man shall see the
" Lord &c."

Note, The instituted means, whereby we are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, are suggested to us in those words of our apostle, ver. 38, 39.—Then *Peter* said unto them, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*.—As, without repentance, there is no remission of sin; so, without baptism, there is no receiving [no other appointed way of receiving] the *Holy Ghost*. And baptism, which is called the initiatory sacrament, is the entrance, as into the church, so into all the other means of grace.

As we have treated of Christ's sacerdotal office, on *Heb. v.* (our second proper lesson for evening prayer, on the Sunday before *Easter*) it might be proper, on the present occasion, to take notice of his regal office, which *St. Peter* mentions, ver. 36. *God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Christ*: But, for want of room, this must be adjourned to some other opportunity; having elsewhere considered it under the head of Christ's threefold office. See also *Dr. Scot's Christian Life*, concerning the mediatorial Kingdom of Christ.

^f As our Lord said to his disciples of the Holy Ghost—He is *with* you, and shall be *in* you. *John.* ^g *Heb. xii. 14.*



MONDAY *in* EASTER-WEEK.

P R O P E R L E S S O N S.

The First } for M. Pr. { *Exodus*, Chap. xvi.
 Second } { *Matt.* Chap. xxviii.

The First } for Ev. Pr. { *Exodus*, Chap. xvii.
 Second } { *Acts*, Chap. iii.

P R E F A C E.

TH E season of Penitence and Mortification being now over, the Church applies herself to instruct us on this, and her other succeeding Festivals and Sundays, until the Trinity-season, in the several points of Faith, and of that Obedience, which is the genuine fruit and evidence thereof.

The point at this time propounded to our Faith, is the great article of our Lord's Resurrection. And to impress this more deeply on our minds, the Church hath thought fit to add to yesterday's festival two more days of this week; namely, this and the ensuing Day; that so she may not only inculcate the belief of this prime Fundamental, but also the Doctrines deducible from it; namely, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Resurrection of our own Bodies.

This design of the Church appears mostly evident from the portions she has selected out of the New Testament, on this occasion: Whereas her two first Lessons, for this day

day and to-morrow, seem but remotely to have any aspect or reference thereto.

Howbeit, if we consider the children of Israel as a Typical People, both in their ecclesiastical and civil polity, and with respect both to their religious services, and ritual institutions, and also to their Commonwealth, as they were a community distinct and separate from the rest of the world^a, and taken to be God's own Peculiar; we shall find, that, from the beginning, the great end of Providence, in these dispensations, was to make this People the Image and Figure of the Christian Church, and the Evangelical State; as well as to preserve a chosen Seed, for the propagation of that State, when the fulness of time should come.

If we take a view of the Israelitish Nation in this light, we shall reap very profitable instructions from all the remarkable occurrences, which are recorded to have befallen them; especially in the wilderness, and within that period, which intervenes between their leaving Egypt, and their peaceable settlement in the land of Canaan. "These things (as St. Paul testifies) happened unto them for ensamples, and were written for Our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come^b."

The Use, therefore, we are to make of the two First Lessons for this Day's service (which contains the History of their murmurings for food, and for water; of God's raining down manna from heaven for their food, and supplying them with water out of the rock for drink), is principally this; that the Manna and the Rock are both of them emblems of Christ: For so our Lord himself^c, and his Apostle^d, expressly affirm.—The parallel also between the Paschal Lamb, and our Lord's Passion; the Passage through the Red Sea, and Baptism; the Delivery from Egyptian bondage, and our Redemption from Sin; the quitting of that country with an high hand, and

^a See Numb. xxiii. 9.

^b 1 Cor. x. 11.

^c John vi.

^d 1 Cor. x.

ur renouncing the world, &c.; the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea; and the overthrow of our spiritual enemies by our Lord's Descent into Hell, and by us in the Waters of Baptism, wherein we are said to be "Buried with him;" is so obvious and plain, that the hint alone is sufficient to every Christian to make the application; and hath already been so applied in the course of these essays: So that we cannot but observe the interest and concern we all have in every thing that beset the Jews.—But then, it is no less observable, that the Ingratitude, Obstinacy, and Impatience, of the Israelites (notwithstanding all the miracles of Mercy, which God had wrought for them), is too commonly to be found among Christians; and affords a melancholy instance, that although, in our Baptism, the Guilt of original sin be done away, yet the Corruption and Depravity of it still remain, and are apt to break out into rebellion and contumacy against God, upon the slightest occasions and trials.—And whoever looks narrowly into his own heart, and compares what passes there with the Wanderings, Murmurings, Rebellions, Discontents and Perverseness, Idolatry and Plagues, Stubbornness and Disobedience, of these Israelites, during their sojourning in the wilderness, will discover more reason to abhor the resemblance he will find of those things in Himself, than, what we are all too apt to do, to condemn the deformity of the Original in that obstinate and stiff-necked People.

And these Reflections, and Self-applications, are the more necessary at this time, when the spirit of Puritanism, and conceit of sinless Perfection, is again revived amongst us.

* Rom. vi. 4.

M O N D A Y in E A S T E R - W E E K.

First Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

E X O D U S, Chap. xvi.

The Israelites murmur, for want of food. God sends them manna from heaven.

1. **A**N D they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

2. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

EXactly a month after their departure out of Egypt, the Israelites entered into the wilderness of Sin, encamping between Elim and the famous mountain of Sinai. This place being perfectly barren, and all the provisions spent, which they had brought from Egypt; and there appearing no prospect of any further supply; their present necessity quite overcame their patience, and all sense of God's former favours and miracles.—They now think of nothing but their flesh-pots in Egypt; they openly vent their murmurings and complaints against Moses and Aaron, for bringing them into this starving condition; nay, they break out into impious wishes, that God had destroyed them in Egypt, where they had bread

to the full; rather than have brought them to perish with hunger, in that barren wilderness.—O frailty of human nature! how apt are we to forget God, his wisdom, his power, his goodness, upon every slight temptation and difficulty! How ready to murmur and complain at his providence! how much more affected with worldly, than with spiritual, wants! with the little comforts and accommodations of this life, than with all the means and provisions which God's mercy affords for the salvation of our souls, and the attainment of everlasting happiness!—To the carnal man, a bellyful is of more value, than the grace and favour of God.—To provide or secure the food that perisheth, what will he not do, what will he not bear? To gain that, which endureth to eternal life, how little pains will he take! What small earthly pleasure will he forego!—So harsh a lesson to the body, is self-denial: So averse are we all by nature to spiritual and divine things; so sensible of every little trouble that offends the flesh!

4. *Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.*

But see the forbearance, condescension, and goodness of God, to this ungrateful people!—This was the third time of their murmuring; yet God is so gracious, that he does not yet punish, nor even reproach them; but promises to supply their wants; and that not in anger, but in order to make a further trial of their obedience. It is his property to overcome us, if possible, with love, before he suffer his justice to strike.—“His anger moves with slowest pace; his willing mercy flies.”—And doth he feed the *Israelites* with bread from heaven? Then we are sure his servants shall never want their necessary food.—Those who are of the world, have their provision from the world; there

they seek and expect it; but God's children are the pensioners of heaven, they are immediately fed from above: They are the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of his hand.—The worldly man may, indeed, have greater store, and much wealth laid up by him, for many years; and hug himself in his abundance of the things which he possesseth; while the true *Israelite* hath it but from hand to mouth, a *certain rate every day*, the portion of a day in its day (as the *Hebrew* well expresses it); but then he needs no more: The present stock is sufficient for him, who is sure to be as well provided for to-morrow: What, therefore, can be more reasonable, than our Lord's advice; "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself?"—Can any thing be a more easy proof of our faith in God, and reliance on his providence, than this?—O bounteous Lord, and preserver of men, how little must that faith be, that will not trust thee till to-morrow!—Earthly goods and possessions are of small account to such as have a lively sense and belief of heavenly treasures.—Nothing is more dreadful to nature than poverty, when it is involuntary; but it becomes delightful to us, when the love of *Jesus Christ* commands us to forsake all for his sake; or when we can part with our riches freely, to relieve the wants of others.

5. *And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.*

The seventh day being the sabbath, no *manna* was to be found on that day: A double quantity, therefore, was to be laid up the day before.—To seek it on the sabbath is not only a sin, but a folly. Who so thinks to earn his bread by working on the Lord's day, at once commits a capital crime, by breaking the royal

† *Matthew* vi. 34.

law ; and is sure to lose his labour, by forfeiting the blessing of heaven : Whereas, if we dedicate our time and service to God, on *his* days (such are all the sundays, and all the holy festivals of the church), he will never fail to make it up to us by a double portion, when we are seeking our bread by an honest industry on our own days ; namely, the days permitted us to labour in.—’Tis the “ blessing of the Lord only that “ maketh rich ; and he addeth no sorrow with it^s.” But it is in God’s way only that we are to expect God’s blessing.

6. *And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt.*

7. *And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD ; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD : And what are we, that ye murmur against us ?*

8. *And Moses said, This shall be when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full ; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him : And what are we ? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD.*

misfortune.—But if we seek first the kingdom of hea-

Temporal blessings are no certain signs of God’s favour. He grants the *manna* and the *quails* to the *Israelites*, in answer, not to their prayers, but to their murmurings. ’Tis true, they stood in need of daily food ; but they wanted faith and patience more : This righteousness they neither hungered nor thirsted after : Wherefore God, though he sent them meat enough for their bodies, yet, as the *Psalmist* spake, “ he sent “ leanness withal into their “ souls ;” *i. e.* he withheld his grace, because not asked for, nor desired.—Thus worldly-minded men have often their wish granted, but not for their wealth. What they count their blessing is often their curse, and a real

^s Prov. x. 23.

ven, and his righteousness, as our Lord advises us to do^h, or make wisdom our choice, as *Solomon* did, all other necessities shall be added unto us. But if we give worldly things the preference, the things of heaven, and real goods, shall be taken away.—How foolish then is such a choice! how unthrifty the gain!

9. *And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.*

10. *And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.*

11. *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

12. *I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.*

13. *And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.*

Taking the *quails*, and the *manna*, in their mystical sense; and understanding, by the first, the blessings and comforts of this temporal life, by the other, the supplies of Divine Grace, and the spiritual food of the soul; we are to observe, that both are the gifts of God, and therefore to be received with thanksgiving; and the use thereof to be employed according to the order he hath directed; in the first place, to his glory; and, in the second place, for the good of ourselves, and others.—The *quails*, being flesh, may well represent the enjoyments and conveniencies of this life: But the *manna*, coming from heaven, doth most properly signify that better part, which, comparatively speaking, and as our Lord expressly stiles it, is the one thing needful.—Many and instructive are the reflections, which the pri-

^h *Matthew* vi. 33.

14. *And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.*

15. *And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, ⁱ It is manna : for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.*

that he is the substance ; the *true* bread which came down from heaven ; the bread of God, which giveth life to the world ^k.—In Christ are, indeed, contained all the good things, which are severally represented by the *manna* ; for he is all in all.

16. *This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded : Gather of it every man according to his eating : an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons, take ye every man for them which are in his tents.*

17. *And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.*

18. *And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much, had*

mitive fathers have made concerning the *manna* : They compared to it the Scriptures, the Eucharist, the Divine Grace, descending from heaven with the *dew* of God's favour and goodness, and operating by good works, which are to be wrought early, and in the *morning* of life. But our blessed Lord, who is the best expositor of his own word, compares and applies it to himself ; that the *manna* was a type of him ;

The exactness of the proportion which fell to the share of every single person, was no less miraculous than the *manna* itself.—God knows not only what we want, but how much is sufficient for us.—This is the just and true competence, which yet none will ever know, who suffer their lusts, and unbridled appetites, to cater for them.—How much better and wiser is it to keep to the rule and order of Providence ? So shall we neither

ⁱ See annotation at the end.

^k John vi.

nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating.

exceed, nor fall short of, what we have need of.—This very case happens oftener than we think: Consult experience, and you'll often find the gree-

dy gatherer of riches, has, at the long run, no more than his *omer*: After all his pains, his wealth dwindles and sinks away to an ordinary proportion; so that he *hath nothing over*; while he, that is more moderate in his desires, and contents himself with less, may seem to have *gathered little*, yet shall have *no lack*.—This, by some of the fathers, is applied to the case of communicants, of whom some partake more frequently, others more rarely, of the Holy Eucharist: That herein every one must be the best judge for himself; and should therefore gather *according to his eating*; i. e. according to that proportion, which he finds suits his spiritual occasions best. A man's own conscience, and not another's, must be his guide and director, on this occasion. And where this is regulated by the order of the church where we reside, or by our own best judgment, he that receives the communion ofteneft, will have *nothing over*, nor more than the other; and he that receives less frequently, shall *not lack*, or have less than he needeth. The like proportion, we may presume, holds in all the other ordinary means of grace, when used with prudence, and due advice: So that we are not to esteem ourselves the holier persons, or richer in grace, for the greater frequency, or more extraordinary nature, of the means we use; nor despise and think meanly of our brother, who hath not the same opportunity, or, perhaps, need to use the same helps that we do. All should be done *according to our eating*; according to our respective measure: This will bring all to an equality: So that “he that eateth, will have no cause to despise him that eateth not; nor he that eateth not, to judge him that eateth.”

† Romans xiv. 3.

The

19. *And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.*

20. *Notwithstanding they hearkned not unto Moses, but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: And Moses was wroth with them.*

21. *And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.*

row, than thankful for the present; who are too tenacious and sparing of what they possess, that they may heap up wealth and die rich:—But all that is so saved, shall *breed worms*, and *stink*; become useless to themselves, and, like an offensive stench, disgust both God and man.—For the like reasons, the passover was forbidden to be reserved until the morning. See on chap. xii. ver. 10.

22. *And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.*

23. *And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake, to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which*

The moral of this is a reproof to those covetous and penurious spirits, who hoard up their wealth, and have not the heart to use it, either for their own present necessities, or the relief and benefit of others.—It condemns also those who are afraid to trust God for their future support, and depend more on their own care and management, than the blessing, or even promises, of Divine Providence; who are more anxious for the mor-

Another instruction which these rules, given to the *Israelites*, concerning their gathering the *manna*, should suggest to us, is this: The six days, on which they might gather it, represent to us the term of this mortal life; the seventh day, or day of rest, is the emblem of eternity, when the season of life is past, and no man can work. “While we have time therefore (as St. Paul speaks, *Gal. vi. 10.*), let us

remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

24. *And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.*

25. *And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to-day ye shall not find it in the field.*

26. *Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.*

careful to grow in grace, to double his stock, and his diligence, “that he may lay up in store for himself
“a good foundation against the time to come, that
“he may lay hold on eternal life^m.”

27. *And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.*

28. *And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments, and my laws?*

29. *See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread*

“do good. For the night
“cometh, saith the Lord
“[the night of death], when
“no man can work.”—He that defers till then to make the necessary provision for his soul in a state of eternity, is like those *Israelites*, who went to seek for manna on the *sabbath-day*:—Whereas the wise Christian, like the wise virgins, furnishes his lamp with oil, against the bridegroom comes; yea, on the *sixth* day; that is to say, on the verge of life; and the nearer his dissolution approaches, will be the more

What shall we say to this unaccountable behaviour of the *Israelites*? They go out on the *sabbath* to gather what they were told they should not find. They had received (or might have received) on one day the portion of two, and yet were not content. In the first instance, they betrayed a gross infidelity; in the other a spirit of insatiable avarice; in both, a distrust of Providence.—

^m 1 Tim. vi. 19.

of two days : abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

30. *So the people rested on the seventh day.*

Shall we say with the *Roman poet* ⁿ,

“ O fatal blindness of the
“ human mind,

“ Void of celestial light, and
“ to the earth inclin’d !”

Or rather, consider this disorderly conduct as a perverseness of the will, more than of the understanding? It is plain, God is pleased so to describe the action. SEE, saith he, *the Lord hath given you on the sixth day the bread of two days : How long REFUSE ye to keep my commandments, and my laws ?*—It was not, therefore, blindness or ignorance, but downright perverseness; for refusing is an act of the will. They could not but see and know what the Lord had done for them ; but they would not see ; they had eyes, and saw not ; they had ears, and heard not ; because they would not.—This was the character and temper of their posterity in our Saviour’s time, which he so often upbraids them with.—And alas ! is it not still the very spirit and temper of us all ? Who is there that enjoys his double portion of the good things of this life, and yet hankers not after more ? We are neither contented with the portion of time, nor the provision of bread, which God has been pleased to allot us, for our necessary wants.—What is sufficient for nature and necessity, is too little for lust.—And though God reserve to himself but a *seventh* of our time, how few are there, who do not seem to think that seventh part too much ? How often are we intrenching on the Lord’s own day, by our insatiable pursuits of the profits and pleasures of the world ?—On this impartial self-review, who is there that treads not in the steps of these wayward *Israelites* ?—Are the worldly, and the vain, the only defaulters herein, the only copiers of this bad example ?—Nay, the best of us all, the very Per-

ⁿ *Heu cæcas hominum mentes, cælestium inanes !* Persius.

fectionist himself, did he know, as he ought to know, the holiness of God's law, and the deceitfulness of the heart of man, would discover in his own so many abominations °, and so much of these *Israelites* perverseness in his own character, as would rather create in him the deepest abhorrence, than tempt him to entertain any vain conceits of that kind of perfection, which presumes on an indefectible state of grace, and a sinless life, while we are in this mortal body.—Whoever he be that sets up for such a state of perfection, exalts himself above the measure of *St. Paul*, or any of the saints, who have yet appeared upon earth; and therefore he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him. As nothing concerns us more than to beat down and mortify this pride of the heart, the same image of human weakness, and our natural defectibility, is often represented to us, and inculcated on our minds by various examples. See on chap. xxxii. ver. 9, &c. &c.

31. *And the house of Israel called the name thereof manna; and it was like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.*

32. *And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth: Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generation; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.*

33. *And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put*

If we consider the *manna* as an emblem of the holy Scriptures, we may from the type draw the following useful instructions. First, With respect to the composition, it is twofold: There is the letter and the spirit; *i. e.* the literal and spiritual sense. The *wafer* seems to represent the first; the *honey*, the other. But both must go together, to give that sweetness, and that nourishment, to the soul, which every good man, every true *Israelite*, receives from the study, meditation, and use, of the Di-

° Ezek. ix.

an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

34. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up, before the testimony, to be kept.

35. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

36. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

vine Word.—It is also a seed, or rather like the coriander, or some of our natural seeds, not the same with any of our earthly productions, but bearing some resemblance to them, as spiritual things have an analogy to natural things in many respects.—

The heavenly seed is sown; it groweth up, first, the blade, then the ear, &c. as our Lord speaks in his parable on this subject; that is, if sown in an honest and good heart, it increases from small beginnings, and by slow de-

grees, till it come to perfection; therefore not instantaneously, as some late teachers hold.—But although the composition be twofold, the colour is but one; the colour is *white*.—This may intimate to us the unmixed purity of God's holy word: That both the literal and spiritual sense wear the same bright and resplendent character of light and truth; being equally inspired by him, who is the Lamb without spot, and the Light of the world.—It reminds us likewise, that the *Vita Color* [as the *Latins* speak], the guise and complexion of our lives and conversation, should be of the same colour with his, white, shining, and sincere:—That our words, actions, and principles, ought to be uniform, and of a piece; holy and faithful, towards God; just and exemplary, towards men.—Moreover, secondly, With respect to the right use of the divine oracles, we are hereby taught, That, if we gather this sacred *manna* according to the will and command of God, as signified to us by his ministers, and the prescript rules of his church, we shall be *fed* and nourished thereby, while we sojourn in the wilderness of this world; even until we come to the borders
of

of the land of Canaan; i. e. to our promised inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.—But if we gather it only to serve some private ends of curiosity, or selfish views, and consequently in opposition to the will of God, and the rules and orders of his church; or if we reserve it, to gratify any sinister purpose; our *manna*, even this food from heaven, shall *breed worms, and stink*; that is to say, shall produce heresy or schism in our religion; error and corruption in our life and manners: But if we reserve it, according to the commandment, for sacred use, for the honour of God, and the food of our souls, it shall be blessed to us, and breed no *worms* of heretical pravity, or dangerous mistakes.—Where, note, it is not said, that it was turned to worms, but that it *bred* them: The word of God itself remains incorruptible; but it will *breed* corruption in them who abuse it. They that are unjust, will not only be unjust still, but grow more and more so, by the abuse of the holy Scriptures.—Another profitable instruction it likewise suggests to us: If it be reserved and *laid up* for us by the hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*; that is, by the governors and laws of our church and state, as it is in this happy establishment of our national Church (for so her Lessons, and more particularly her Proper Lessons, are); it will not only be preserved untainted, or rather preserve us from being tainted, but remain (and God grant it may) for the benefit of our *generations*; even for us and our posterity; especially if it be laid up in our tabernacle or church; and be kept *before the testimony*, by which is meant the ark of the covenant. And this, methinks, is a further lesson to us, that the proper repository for the divine word is a firm adherence to the unity of the church, and our own baptismal covenant, whereof our heart should be the *ark*: Here, if constantly kept, it will be a lamp to shew, and a guide to teach us our duty: So shall we always not only know, but daily perform our vows.

Ver. 15. *It is manna.*] How much better the translation in our margin, *What is this?*—A natural question, on seeing what they had never seen or known before.—Ver. 31. It is described to be *like coriander-seed, white, and the taste of it like wafers made with honey.*—*Josephus* speaks of manna still falling in some places; but it was rather something like it, than *manna* itself, or of the same species with it. *Galen* also, and other authors, mention a kind of manna, which falls at certain seasons: But this is used only in medicines, and has neither the taste nor the virtue of this miraculous manna, wherewith God fed his people in the wilderness: The properties and taste whereof are thus described by the Wise Man: “Thou feddest thine own people with angels food, and didst send from heaven bread prepared without their labour, able to content every man’s delight, and agreeing to every taste”, &c.”—And *David* also calls it *angels food*, and *bread from heaven*.

¶ *Wisdom* xvi.



MONDAY



MONDAY *in* EASTER-WEEK.

Second Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

MATTHEW, Chap. xxviii.

After reading the Lesson.

THE resurrection of *Jesus Christ* being the grand Fundamental on which the Christian Religion is built, the Church is the more careful to establish the truth thereof. In her second Lessons, and all the Gospels which she hath chosen on this solemn occasion, she lays before us the proofs necessary for confirming our belief of the matter of Fact; and leaves it to the meditations of the pious reader, to apply the use and happy consequences of the doctrine to his own comfort, as well as instruction and practice.

In treating of this important article of our Creed, which is the subject of our present meditation, it seems of use to consider the Resurrection in its several aspects and relations. It relates both to the Soul and the Body of man: And, we may say, each of these relations have a twofold view; the soul and the body have each of them a double resurrection, as may be gathered from the following considerations.

When we compare the present state of man with that state wherein he was created, we find, by the character

character which God gave of the works he had made, that they were not only *good*, but *very good*^a. This shews that all the creatures were endued with every perfection they were capable of receiving from the hand of an all-wise and bountiful Creator. Man, though complete, and perfectly good, as to the human nature, was yet capable of further improvement, with regard to his Soul, which he had immediately received from God himself (for God breathed into him the breath of life); and therefore, to make man perfectly happy, as well as intelligent and wise, we may very reasonably conclude, that, together with the Soul, or Breath of Life, God inspired into him, at the same time, his own blessed Spirit. By which divine gift, man, in the truest and best sense, became a *living* soul; and therefore, *very good*: This inspired gift of God was the life of the rational Soul, as the animal Soul was of the Body. But man transgressing lost the divine life of the Spirit, and instantly died, according to the sentence denounced—IN THE DAY thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely *die*. —To raise the soul to life again, by a restoration of the Holy Ghost, was the great end of our Lord's coming into the world: By dying for man he expiated the Guilt of the crime for which man stood condemned to suffer Death: By shedding his blood, he cleansed man from the impurity and corruption which he had contracted by Original Sin; and thereby fitted him for the reception of the Holy Spirit, which had been forfeited and lost, and restored him to the Spiritual Life again.—This Restitution, which commences in Baptism, and is improved by the other means of grace, may well be called the *Resurrection of the Soul*.—This Resurrection indeed can have its effect only while we continue upon Earth, and during the evangelical state, and gospel-dispensation; there being no room, or hopes, for its taking place

^a Gen. i.

in the other world, if we die without having first received the Spirit of Grace: In that case the death of an impenitent Sinner will prove a Double death; and the sentence of *Dying thou shalt die*, will be executed both on the Soul and the Body; by Temporal and Eternal death.—And God hath declared, That “without holiness no man shall see the Lord^b.”

As to the *resurrection of the Body*, this will only be at the last and general Judgment, when Christ appearing again, in his bodily, but glorified presence, shall raise all that are in their graves to life again, by reuniting their Souls to their Bodies, and then adjudge both to an happy or unhappy Immortality in a future state, according to what they have done in the flesh. But here it may not be amiss to mention also, a *first* resurrection of the body, which the Scripture mentions more than once; and that not in a figurative sense, as some seem to imagine, but really and truly, according to the letter; for so our Evangelist relates, as a matter of fact, that at the passion of Christ “the graves of saints were opened; that “the bodies which slept arose, and came out of their “graves after his resurrection, and went into the “holy City, and appeared unto many^c.”—Again, if we consider the account which St. *John* hath given us of a resurrection, which he tells us will happen, when Christ comes to reign with his saints upon earth (whereas of the rest of the dead, meaning the wicked part of mankind, he expressly saith, they lived not again until the thousand years were finished); this rising of the saints before the wicked, is by him called the *first Resurrection*: And then he adds, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in this first “resurrection.”—This then is what we mean, and ought to believe, of that *first resurrection of the body* we are speaking of; but withal it is to be noted, that it is called *first*, with respect to the time when

^b Heb. xii. 14.

^c Ch. xxvii. 52, 53.

the wicked are to rise, and not with respect to the saints themselves ; as if a second resurrection of them were intended, or to be supposed.—Note we also, that this doctrine of the saints rising first, and before the general resurrection of the dead, is confirmed to us by *St. Paul*, in *1 Thess.* iv. 16. where, speaking of the resurrection of the body, at the coming of Christ to judgment, he saith expressly, *The dead in Christ shall RISE FIRST.*

As the doctrine of the spiritual life, or the knowledge of that renovated state whereby every believing and baptized person hath the Holy Ghost restored to him, is one of the most concerning effects, and indeed the very end (as before observed) of our Lord's Incarnation, Suffering, and Resurrection ; and therefore deserves to be well considered, understood, and received with the deepest and most pious gratitude, as the greatest blessing of heaven, and a fund of unspeakable comfort ; our excellent Church in one of her yesterday's Lessons, hath, with great wisdom and propriety, set this doctrine before us ; the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans* appearing to be designedly chosen for that purpose ; to which the pious reader is referred.

In *St. Peter's* sermon, which is the substance of the Second Proper Lesson for yesterday's evening service, we had the proofs of our Lord's resurrection from the testimony of Scripture ; in our present Lesson we have the testimony of sense, and matter of fact. The witnesses produced, though of several kinds, do all agree in the evidence. First the *angels* ; then the *women*, who came early to the sepulchre, and not only heard the testimony which the angels gave of his being risen, but afterwards saw with their eyes the holy *Jesus* ; spake with him in person ; and received a message from him, to go and tell his disciples, that he was risen : On this information *Peter* and *John*, coming to the Sepulchre, found all the circumstances true, which the women had related :

And though, at that time, they saw him not, yet saw they him afterwards in *Galilee*, where he had appointed them to meet him.—Even his enemies also were made witnesses of his resurrection; for the soldiers, who were set to guard the tomb, were convinced, beyond all doubt, that he was risen; for when they were recovered out of their fright, occasioned by the earthquake, and the opening of the grave, at the time of his rising, they went into the city, and related what they had seen, to the chief priests, and elders; who, not being able to deny the plain matter of fact, gave large bribes to the soldiers to falsify the truth, and to spread the lying story which they had invented to suppress it.—But to all unprejudiced persons, this very forgery contributed the more to prove the reality of our Lord's resurrection.





MONDAY in EASTER-WEEK.

First Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

Exodus, Chap. xvii.

This Chapter consists of two parts; in the first, Moses relates the miracle of the water, which, God brought out of the rock; in the second, is related, the victory obtained by Joshua over the Amalekites, through the prayers and intercession of Moses.

After Reading the Chapter.

THE miracle wrought, in bringing water out of the rock, by the stroke of *Moses's* rod, to allay the thirst, and stop the murmurings, of the children of *Israel*, while it obliges us to reflect upon the incredulity of that people, who were continually distrusting the goodness and power of God, and rebelling against him, ought to instruct us (as our holy Church intended it should, by her choice of this Lesson on this occasion) in the great benefit and blessing of the mystery contained therein; and how the thirst of our souls is to be quenched by the wounds of Christ, who was smitten for us, and whose Crucifixion we have been lately commemorat-

ing; for so the Apostle expounds it, that that rock, which *Moses* smote, was *Christ*^a. And the Apostle adding, that this spiritual rock *followed* them; that is to say, the water which flowed from it, followed them; may intimate to us (who are the present *Israel* of God), that the same spiritual drink, which issued out of the wounds of Jesus Christ, who is the rock of our salvation, is a living, perpetual spring, which still *follows* us, while we sojourn in the wilderness of this world.

And as the victory over the *Amalekites* is an instance of the just punishment which God inflicted on the enemies of his Church, who came to fight against *Israel*; so is it also a type and emblem of our victory over the enemies of our salvation, if so be the true *Joshua*, our blessed Lord and Saviour, be our captain, to lead us out to battle; but, at the same time, we are to take notice, that as *Joshua* did not prevail but by the prayers of *Moses*, so neither shall we prevail, nor even our *Jesus* for us, except we lift up holy hands and hearts to God, and persevere in prayer. This is the only way to obtain his assistance, and to triumph over all our enemies, both spiritual and temporal.

As *Moses* prayed while the battle lasted, and thereby gained the victory; we read, that after the victory was obtained he *built an altar unto the Lord*; so ought we, whenever we obtain any blessing from him: We also must erect an altar of praise and thanksgiving to him that giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And as he called the name of his altar JEHOVAH-NISSI; *i. e.* The Lord my throne or banner; or, as others render it, The Lord my exaltation, my glory; so should we render all the praise and glory to God, for all the benefits or successes we receive from his hands, in answer to our prayers: And whoso “ lifteth up holy hands, without wrath

^a 1 Cor. x. 4.

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“and doubting ^b,” will often experience the gracious returns of God to his petitions; and, if we follow the pious example of the holy *Moses*, in our returns of thanks, and grateful acknowledgments to God, for the mercies we receive, he will not fail to continue them to us as often as we call; for so he hath promised,——“Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me ^c.”

^b 1 *Tim.* ii. 8;

^c *Psalms* l. 15;





MONDAY *in* EASTER-WEEK.

Second Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

ACTS, Chap. iii.

After Reading the Lesson.

TO confirm the truth and reality of our Lord's resurrection, which was related to us in our second morning Lesson for this day's service^a, the church, in her present Lesson, sets before us two authentic proofs of the same: First, A miraculous cure performed on an impotent man, in the name of *Jesus*; and restored from his lameness through *the faith which is in him*: And next, a sermon preached by *St. Peter* to the people on that occasion.

The man, on whom the cure was wrought, had been a cripple *from his mother's womb*.—This extraordinary miracle proved not only the truth and power of Christ's resurrection, by a visible attestation from Heaven; but we may also gather from it this comfortable reflection, that the circumstance and manner of this cure on the impotent man, through faith *in the Name of Jesus Christ*, is a significant emblem of our recovery from the impotence we contracted by

original sin, wherein we were born; and that it is only in virtue of his Name, and through faith in him as crucified, and risen again, that we can be restored to a perfect soundness from our natural weakness and infirmity.

When the man felt in himself the immediate and powerful efficacy of St. Peter's words, bidding him, *in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to rise up and walk*; we read, that he, *leaping up, stood, and walked; and entred, with Peter and John, into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God*: This is a cogent example, not only of gratitude and joy for all benefits and graces received, but that we should immediately repair to the house of God to render there our thanks, and pay the vows of our distress.—The man's *holding Peter and John by the hand*, when he entred with them into the temple, is likewise a very exemplary admonition, that all, who are once admitted into the church, and in communion with her lawful and established teachers, should closely adhere to them; and never forsake those by whose ministration they have received pardon and forgiveness of sins; that is, have been baptized, instructed, and confirmed.

It is said, that the people also *ran together into Solomon's porch, greatly wondring*.—To come to church for curiosity only, to see, and to be seen, is a very low and unworthy motive: Come, however! it is putting yourself in God's way; the church is one of his nets: Some fish may be caught.—Had not the lame man been at the *Beautiful gate of the temple*, he had not met with a cure: Had not *Peter and John* come thither *at the hour of Prayer*, they would not have had the opportunity of magnifying the Name of the *Lord Jesus*: Had not the people been there, they would have missed the happy means of their conversion, on sight of the miracle, and hearing the apostle's sermon.—Our gracious Lord is upon the catch for souls; he way-lays them at every turn; but especially at his house; some have been caught by a word, some
by

by a book ; nay, I may say by a look ^b; but more, we may presume, by the ministers of his church.

The Apostle having in his sermon asserted the truth of Christ's resurrection, and enforced it from the predictions of the prophets, that he was to suffer, and rise again; and from the testimony of those who were *eye-witnesses* of his resurrection, and even from the miracle which they themselves had seen performed before their eyes, and produced the same as an undoubted evidence of the veracity, both of the fact, and of the testimony given; he next calls on his hearers, and all who had been accessories to the crucifying of the Lord of life, to *repent* of so heinous a crime: But, that they might not be overwhelmed with the sense of their guilt, and despair of pardon, he encourages them with the hope, that their sin would be *blotted out*, if so be they repented thereof, and were *converted*: And to extenuate, in some degree, the enormity of their crime, he ascribes it rather to their ignorance than any malice prepenſe;—nay, gives them hope, not only that their sin should be *blotted out*, and absolutely forgiven, on their repentance, but likewise that a *time of refreshing* should come from the presence of the Lord, and a time of *Restitution of all things*, &c.—That this was a comfortable hearing, cannot be doubted; but what the full meaning of such *refreshing*, and *restitution*, was to them, or now to us (who certainly have an interest in the same promise), is hard to tell.—It is easy to say, as some expound it, that it means the relieving our conscience from the intolerable burden of sin;—an eternal rest, and happy release, from the troubles and cares of this life in a better world: This, we confess, is true, and a most happy effect of Christ's resurrection through faith in him. But though this be true,

^b On seeing a person (not then remarkable for piety) falling down on his knees to say his prayers before he went into bed, the author was shamed into a sense of devotion, and afterwards made the happy instrument of reclaiming the other.

as to the *refreshing* spoken of; yet still, what is to be understood by the *restitution of all things*? This, surely, cannot relate to the felicities of Heaven itself, which no man living on earth was ever in possession of; and therefore *restitution* of such things cannot refer to us mortals.—Dr. Hammond explains *refreshing* by consolation and deliverance, and understands it of that coming of Christ mentioned in *Matt. xxiv.* “to punish the *Jewish* nation; which, as it should bring destruction on his enemies, so it should give respice and deliverance to the Christians from the persecution of the *Jews*; and thereby more firmly establish the Gospel:”—He also expounds *restitution* in the same sense, of the “destruction of the *Jewish* nation, and calling of the *Gentiles*.” But this favourite hypothesis of the doctor is not only too confined, as limited to the *Jewish* people; but would have been an unpopular argument to those whom St. Peter was speaking to.—It seems therefore necessary to take it in a far greater latitude, so as to include the whole Christian church as Catholic, and consisting both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The question therefore is, whether it does not rather refer to the consummation of all things at the end of the world, when Christ shall descend from Heaven to reign with his Saints upon earth, according to what the same St. Peter mentions of the *new Heavens* and *new earth*, in his second Epistle, iii. 13.; and is more fully described by St. John in his *Revelations*, chap. xxi.; and which St. Peter here tells us had been spoken of *by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began*.—This was a *restitution* indeed, even a *restitution of all things*; the world with every thing in it, which God, at the creation, had pronounced good, yea, very good, had, we know, been cursed on the fall of man^c; but at the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ^d, that curse will be taken off; and not

^c Gen. iii.^d Titus ii. 13.

only man, but the whole creation also, be restored to their primitive perfection, and state of blessedness.—This then seems, most probably, that *restitution of all things* here spoken of by St. Peter. And St. Paul seems to have the same happy event in view, where he speaks of the earnest expectation of the creature, of a deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. See *Rom. viii. ver. 19, 20, 21, 22.*—Ἀποκατάστασις, among the Heathen philosophers, signified the revolution of a star to its former place:—Among the historians it imported, *Quies reddita rebus turbidis*. Some Christian writers use the word to signify the consummation of all things, and the end of the world:—But, whereas the Apostle St. Peter joins the word *refreshing* therewith, it is not most likely, that the *restitution*, here spoken of, is the restoration of that original righteousness, wherein man was first created, and *all things* restored to their primitive state? And that, on the prospect of this, St. Paul calls it an earnest expectation of the creature, and a *blessed hope*: An event which St. Peter also says *we look for*: And which St. John describes as actually *seen*, and come to pass.

The *resurrection* of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead being one of the most important articles of the Christian Religion, and the main principle on which the truth of it is built, we are the more earnestly to contend for this faith, as it was once delivered to the Saints; and to fortify ourselves with every argument in support thereof; not only from the Scriptures, which foretold, and afterwards recorded, the accomplishment and certainty of it; but to consult also the dictates of natural reason concerning the credibility thereof, especially as not *Jews* only, with Gentiles and Heretics of old, but as too many in these more Infidel, though more enlightned, times, have denied, and endeavoured to invalidate, the evidences of our Lord's resurrection.—But seeing many learned and pious writers of our own church have taken much

pains

pains to establish this truth, and confute these adversaries of our faith (and it may suffice to mention only Mr. *West's* evidence of Christ's Resurrection), no more seems necessary than to attend to the following considerations, in defence of the reasonableness of our belief:

First; The Oracles of God: These foreshew the resurrection in sundry passages of the Old Testament: It is there foretold, that "the Soul of Christ should not be left in hell, nor his body suffered to see corruption;" that is, to corrupt and moulder in the grave.—To prove the Divine Veracity, it was necessary, that Christ should rise again from the dead, and that too on the *third* day, before the body should begin to corrupt; as Naturalists say, the body is subject to after being three days dead.

Secondly; If we attend to the *Omnipotence* of God, we may reason as St. *Paul* did, "Why should it be thought incredible, that God should raise the dead?"—Resurrection from death, though a thing unusual, and strange to nature, yet cannot be more strange than many other miracles of the like kind: If we believe the almighty power of God in *creating* the world out of *nothing*, it must be extremely perverse to dispute the Creator's power in restoring life to one that was dead; which must be acknowledged to be a lesser miracle of the two.

Thirdly; The testimony of credible witnesses: This has ever been admitted for good evidence in matters of fact: Even two witnesses are generally allowed to be sufficient: But the witnesses of Christ's resurrection were not two, or three, but *twelve*; yea, a far greater number; even *five hundred* were present at, and beheld, his ascension, after his rising from the dead.—Nay, the very means used by his enemies to disprove the truth of it; and that very frivolous excuse made by those who were set to guard his sepulchre,

* *Psalms* xvi.

† *Acts* xxv.

That the body was stolen away, while they slept; this was rather a demonstration, than a refutation of the truth, which they meant to suppress.

Fourthly; Again, the wonderful effects and consequences of our Lord's resurrection must be allowed to be an incontestable proof thereof:—Not only the miracles wrought by his disciples, in his name, after his death, was a certain sign of the truth and power of his resurrection; but the conversion of the world to the Christian faith hath ever since been a standing argument for the truth of it; and therefore the doubts, or opposition which have been made thereto, can serve only to prove the impiety and unreasonableness of unbelievers:—For what can be more impious and unreasonable, than to refuse submission to the authority of God's word; to doubt his power; to contradict the plainest evidence of fact, and the dictates of reason and common sense; as well as defeat all the hopes of our common salvation?





TUESDAY in EASTER-WEEK.

P R O P E R L E S S O N S.

The First	}	for M. Pr.	{	Exodus, Chap. xx.
Second				Luke, Ch. xxiv. to V. 13.
The First	}	for Ev. Pr.	{	Exodus, Chap. xxxii.
Second				1 Cor. Chap. xv.

P R E F A C E.

IF the Israelites, now in the wilderness, be considered in their Typical character, as prefiguring the CHRISTIAN Church in its infancy, newly redeemed and purchased by the blood of Christ (who was the true Paschal Lamb), and so bearing the image of all those, who should thereafter be in a state of spiritual life and grace; we shall find our holy Church proceeding in strict conformity with her type. For, as it pleased God, to publish his law to the Israelites very soon after their deliverance from Egypt, and their coming under his more immediate protection and conduct; so this our Church takes the like opportunity (while we are celebrating our more glorious Redemption from the tyranny of sin and Satan, whereof the other was but a shadow and prefiguration) to publish to her people the same Ten Commandments of God, which were delivered at Sinai, because they contain that part of the Divine Law, which was never to be repealed, or annulled, being the Eternal and most perfect rule of life and manners; and which the Lawgiver himself, our blessed Lord, and Saviour, assures us, he “ came not to destroy,
“ but

“but to fulfil^a.” Yea, he set us his own divine example to teach us how to fulfil it, and how to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life.

As the TIME, so the manner likewise of the promulgation of this divine law affords much matter of Instruction.

For as the season, which God and his Church have thought most opportune for publication of the moral law, is that which follows close on the commemoration of our redemption; this may admonish us, not only that we are to “add to our faith virtue;” but also another truth of great importance, tho’ too little attended to; namely, That no soul is duly qualified to hear the voice of God speaking in his word and Commandments, until he quit the spiritual Egypt, and renounce the corrupt manners and conversation of the world; till he shall have passed thro’ the sea of true baptism, and hath been born again of the Spirit.—In a word; until he be endued with the spiritual life, no person can have ears to hear, eyes to see, or a heart to apprehend and embrace, the holy laws and will of God.

The MANNER, wherewith this law was delivered to the Jews, was so very solemn and tremendous, as not only made Them to tremble at the Sight, but even Moses himself “exceedingly so fear and quake^b.”—These terrifying circumstances seemed indeed necessary for their raw and undisciplined state, as they were yet under the prejudices of carnal and corrupt habits; that so they might be driven by their fears to perform that obedience, which they were not yet capable of doing on the more generous principles of love and gratitude. And this (as St. Paul^c intimates) is the true reason, why the whole Jewish economy had its foundation and sanction in terror, and was charged with so many servile and burdensome observances; which were intended as curbs and scourges to restrain them, like children under the discipline of a schoolmaster, and to keep them within the bounds of duty.

^a Matt. v. 17.

^b Heb. xii.

^c Gal. iii. 23.

But the Christian Law, tho' in substance and purity the very same, and delivered by the same Legislator, and in his own Person (whereas the Jewish law was received by the disposition of angels ^a) was published with no other solemnity, or awfulness, than what attends on plain truth, and a steady unspotted innocence. He spake indeed as no man ever spake; but the authority of his doctrines was more owing to the intrinsic Excellence of them, and to that ingenuous plainness and simplicity, wherewith they were delivered, than to the force of eloquence, or the commanding influence of power. The very miracles he performed in confirmation of them, seemed rather designed for proofs of his love and mercy, than of his Majesty and Almighty power.

TUESDAY in EASTER-WEEK.

First Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

Exodus, Chap. xx.

The moral law given.

1. **AND** God spake all these words, saying,
2. I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

THE following precepts, or commandments, contain the sum and substance of the whole moral law, or that rule of life and manners, which takes in every branch of duty towards God,

our Neighbour, and ourselves. They are expressly called *Ten* ^e, and therefore often stiled the decalogue, or Ten words ^f.—These words, or this form of words, we here read, were all spoken by God himself—*God spake all these words, saying, &c.* Afterwards we are told, that God wrote all these words with his own

^a Acts vii. 53. ^e Deut. v. ^f Ten words.] So the word Decalogue imports, from the Greek δέκα λόγος, i. e. Ten words.

hand, on two tables of stone, and delivered them to *Moses*. So that, strictly speaking, these Ten commandments are the very and immediate word of God, as he himself spake them with his own mouth; and the very and immediate scripture, or holy writ, because God himself wrote them with his own hand.—And this consideration should the more deeply impress them on our mind, and write them in our hearts, that so the constant and indelible sense of our duty, and of the sovereign Power and supreme Authority of the Legislator, may be ever present to influence and direct our obedience to the Divine law.—They are called *Ten words*: But the best and most perfect obedience is, that which reduces them all, as *St. Paul* hath done, to one word, LOVE^g.—And if we attend to the goodness of God in promulging them, and the gracious ends of his providence, in giving us laws so conducive to our happiness, we shall find them to be but so many several instances (Ten times as it were repeated) of his love towards us; and at the same time point to us the several ways, whereby we are to shew our love to Him, and to our neighbour. At least this application falls in most suitably with the present season, when we are commemorating the highest instance of Divine love, that ever appeared towards mankind; to wit, the passion and resurrection of our blessed Redeemer. By obedience we give the strongest proof of our love to him; for so he saith, “If ye love me, keep my commandments^h.”

First Commandment.

3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

The end of the commandment, then, being charity, or the due regulation of love, the two tables point out the proper objects of our affections; the first directing them to God, the second to our neighbour, and the right government of ourselves. The observance of the first table, so directed

^g *Rom. xiii. 9, 10.*

^h *John xiv. 15.*

and animated by love, is RELIGION; even pure religion; and undefiled: The performing the duties of the Second Table on the same principle, is VIRTUE, or the true Christian morality.

Now the first step in religion is to know God; yea, so to know him, as not only to fear, but to love him. And this is the substance of the First Commandment; especially, if we take in the preface or introduction thereto, *I am the Lord thy God, &c.* (which, by the way, is to be premised, and understood, as a Preamble, to every one of the Commandments in both Tables); for then each precept follows as a natural and rational conclusion from that proposition, or premise.

In this First Commandment then, we are enjoined to acknowledge and believe One only true God, the infinite and omnipotent Creator and Governor of all things; the Redeemer and Saviour of all men:—To make Him the sole object of our adoration, obedience, and love, without admitting any rival with him, much less *before* him, in our affections, or any acts of religious worship, and service.

Second Commandment.

4. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

5. *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth*

God is a pure, holy, simple, and spiritual Being: We are therefore to worship him in spirit and in truth; forming worthy and suitable apprehensions of him in our minds by holy acts of faith and love; and not presuming to represent his infinite and all perfect nature by any image, picture, or visible resemblance whatsoever; drawn either by the imagination, or taken from the likeness of any creature (as the ignorant heathens were wont to do), either among
L 1 2 the

generation of them that hate me :

6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, or stars ; or any animal, or thing, whatsoever belonging to the *earth*, or to the *waters*.—All such representations of him being false, and absolutely contrary to his true likeness, the worship paid by their help or intervention is a lye, consequently an abomination to him : And all actions, gestures, or postures, bespeaking religious worship, honour, or reverence, to such *images*, is the capital and formal sin of idolatry. A sin, which God looks upon as the highest slight and contempt on himself, whose supreme and absolute dominion will suffer him to bear no competitor in his worship ; nor his Deity admit of being debased to a *likeness* with his creatures. Such an indignity his justice will be sure to punish as Treason against his high Majesty, as well as against the Holiness and infinite Perfection of his Nature ; not only avenging such impiety on the first authors, but visiting the crime of the parents on the children *to the third and fourth generation*.—But as for those, who continue faithful to their Almighty Lord and Sovereign, and prove the sincerity of their love by their steady obedience to his laws, a sure blessing shall be entailed on them, and their posterity.—Blessed Lord ! how much more diffusive is thy love, than thine anger ! Thy wrath extends but to the *Third*, or at most to the *Fourth* generation ; but thy mercy *unto Thousands* !—And the more extensive thy goodness is, the more powerfully ought it to move us to obey, to praise, and to love thee.

Third Commandment.

7. Thou shalt not take the Name of the LORD thy God in vain : for the LORD will not hold him guiltless

Next to the fixing in our minds, and expressing by our actions, the object and manner of divine worship, namely, *whom* we are to love, and *how* we are to serve

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that taketh his Name in serve and adore him; follows
vain. the honour we are to pay to

his Holy NAME; that is,

how we are to express in our words, as well as actions, the sense and profound reverence we have of his Divine Majesty: That therefore we presume not to use the Sacred Name of GOD on light and trivial occasions; much less appeal to him by way of oath in any promise that we know we cannot, or do not fully design to perform; or in affirming or denying any thing in evidence, but what we know, or firmly believe, to be true.—Nor shall any person swear at all in common discourse, either directly, by any of the Divine Names; nor indirectly, by such things as bear his Sacred Name and Signature.—All such profanations of the blessed Name are not only *vain*; and utterly useless to any good end, or wise purpose; but a bold and insolent outrage against the Majesty of the most High GOD; which, tho' human laws may fail to correct, or take cognizance of, the divine vengeance will be sure to bring into judgment, and most severely punish.—On the contrary, as we have been taught to know the true God, by Name, yea, have been baptized into his Name; true love, which is the best expounder of this command, will not only put us upon learning all those Names of God, and the import of them, whereby he has revealed himself to us in his holy word; but upon shewing forth his praise by our lives, as well as our lips; that so it may appear by our example, that we truly love and honour him, and that we have not taken upon us that worthy Name in vain, whereby we are called.

Fourth Commandment.

8. *Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy.*

9. *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work,*

As the solemn observation of the *Seventh* day had been kept up among the people of God from the first institution, their descendants, especially they who are of the household of faith, are

10. *But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*

11. *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.*

here commanded to continue the same practice, and weekly to *remember* the solemnity and religious use of the *Sabbath day*; constantly setting it apart from all common business, and secular employments, and dedicating it wholly to the worship and service of God. The other Six days are allowed for the use and service of man; but the *seventh* God has reserved for his own, and appointed it to be spent in the offices and duties of religion; such as, First, a

devout commemoration of the great work of Creation.—Secondly, in pious acknowledgments of him the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. Thirdly, in meditating on the obligations we are under to that infinite power and bounty, which hath thus prepared and furnished out this world for our habitation and enjoyment; that by such reiterated contemplations we may improve these tokens of his wisdom and goodness into the most exalted sentiments of love, and holy fear.

The religious observation of the *Sabbath* was the first of all positive institutions: It was enjoined even in paradise, and during our state of innocence; not only for the regulation of our time, with regard to the interest both of our bodies and souls; but also to maintain and perpetuate a constant and most endearing intercourse between us, and our great Creator; and therefore was a law of natural religion, that extended to all mankind, and not to the *Jews* only. But the rest of the world were sunk into a total neglect and forgetfulness, both of the institution, and their Maker. On the revival therefore of this law the *Israelites* are here commanded to *remember* it; yea,

more especially to *remember* it on this additional obligation to gratitude and love, that He, who Made them, was now become their Saviour and Redeemer; —had brought them *out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

In the repetition of these Ten Commandments in *Deut.* the *vth*, this deliverance out of *Egypt* is particularly mentioned as a principal reason for observing the *Sabbath*. But as that deliverance was only typical of our redemption by *Jesus Christ*; and as the redemption from eternal misery was of so much greater concern to the world, than any temporal deliverance, or even than the creation itself, as well as of greater glory to God; this points out and justifies the reason, why our Christian *Sabbath* is kept upon the day, whereon that redemption was wrought and finished, namely, on the day of our great Redeemer's RESURRECTION. This was the day of his rest from that noblest of all his works, the Redemption of the world, and our deliverance from death and hell. Howbeit, tho' the day be changed from the *Seventh* to the *First* of the week, we are still to give a *Seventh* part of our time to God; the morality of the Command being still the same, and the obligation far greater. Yea, the Lawgiver, by whom the change was made, is also the same: So our Lord himself assures us¹ (*Matt.* xii. 8.)—In obedience therefore to his authority, Christians are no less bound to observe the *First* day, than the *Jews* were to keep the *Seventh*, or last of the week.—To conclude, as all other festivals, sacraments, and ceremonies, under the law, were figurative, and had their end in *Christ* (as the Apostle affirms, *Col.* ii. 16, 17.); so the Sabbath of

¹ So our Lord himself assures us.] The words in the Gospel are, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath:" But the original is more expressive; The Son of Man is Lord ALSO of the Sabbath. Κύριος ἐστὶ καὶ τῆ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Consequently he had a power, as to institute it, so to dispense with, or to alter it.

the *Seventh* day was also figurative; and therefore to cease, when Christ the substance came.

Fifth Commandment.

12. *Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*

Next to God, all due reverence and regard is to be paid to our governors and superiors upon earth; and that for the Lord's sake, they being his ministers to us for good; that is, the instruments, by whom he conveys to us his blessing, and the good things of this life. And these are comprised under the endearing stile and character of parents; of which there are three kinds, Natural, Ecclesiastical, Civil or Political. First, Those by nature; the *Father* that begat, and the *Mother* that bare. Under which denomination are also contained, parents by law and affinity, parents that adopt children. Secondly, Ecclesiastical, or Church governors; the bishops and clergy, who are our spiritual parents, our fathers in God. Prophets are also so called, as *Elias*, and *Elisba*, *Deborah*, a mother in *Israel*: Yea, the church itself; which is called the mother of us all^k.—Thirdly, Political parents; Kings and magistrates: All antients in years, patrons, instructors, masters, and all that have authority over us. To all these honour and respect is to be paid, proportionable to their respective dignity.—And the honour, which is to be performed, is, First, with the body, in reverend gesture;—Secondly, in word; with respectful speeches;—Thirdly, in action; by obedience to their instructions and commands, in requiting their love and care, relieving them with our substance in their age and need, and covering their infirmities.—Fourthly, in heart; with reverence, fear, and love, to shew all due respect and honour.—On the contrary, all dishonour, in these or any other instances, is hereby prohibited.

^k Gal. iv. 26.

This law, by the Apostle, is called "The First Commandment with promise^k"; because, being set at the head of the Second Table, which directs us in all duties towards man, it is both the best means of maintaining peace and good order in the world, and securing our own happiness and prosperity therein, with a promise of long life to enjoy it.—In a word, it teaches the duty of humility towards man, in all its branches.

Sixth Commandment.

13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

The *Hebrew* word properly signifieth to *Murder*, or kill unjustly; so that this Sixth Commandment is best

rendered in our Catechism, "Thou shalt do no murder."—Killing another in the case of necessary self-defence, or in judicial proceedings, is not therefore contrary to this law. But all wilful murder, whether of soul or body, of one's self or another, it forbids; not only in act, but in reproachful words, malicious gesture, rash anger, malice and hatred (for "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer^l"); all gluttony and excess, which destroys health, and often kills.—On the contrary it commands us to preserve and defend the life of all men, as well as our own (except they have forfeited their lives to some law); to do all the good we can to the souls and bodies of our neighbours, and ourselves.

This Sixth Command provides for the security of our lives against the violence, revenge, and cruelty, of one another; and enjoins the virtues of benevolence, meekness, and temperance.

Seventh Commandment.

14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

This forbiddeth all manner of whoredom, fornication, and uncleanness; all unnatural filthiness; not only in the outward act, but all that leads thereto; Lascivious words, gestures,

^l *Eph.* vi. 2.

^k *1 John* iii. 15.

and attire; yea, looks and thoughts: For “whoſo
 “looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath commit-
 “ted adultery with her already in his heart^m.”—Con-
 trariwiſe it requires purity in body and ſpirit, whether
 in ſingle life, or the married ſtate; that “every one
 “ſhould know how to poſſeſs his veſſel in ſanctifi-
 “cation and honourⁿ.”—As the foregoing precept
 conſults the preſervation of life, this provides for the
 due propagation of it in that way, which God hath
 pronounced honourable^o, holy, and undefiled.—The
 moral of this Commandment is the virtue of chaſtity,
 in body and mind; and the grace of divine love and
 holineſs, in our ſouls.

Eighth Commandment.

15. *Thou ſhalt not ſteal.*

This prohibits all unjuſt
 invasion of other mens goods
 and properties.—First, All
 ſort of ſtealing; either per-
 ſons or things, by fraud or violence.—Secondly, All
 ſacrilege; taking or keeping back unjuſtly the things,
 which pertain unto God, as tythes and offerings, &c.
 —Thirdly, All kind of diſhoneſty; unrighteouſneſs
 in covenants, contracts, bargains, &c. All oppreſ-
 ſion, extortion, bribery, and corruption, illegal in-
 tereſt of money, or any filthy lucre. Detaining of
 other mens goods, which have been lent, pledged,
 or loſt; juſt debts, &c. Removing of landmarks;
 all idle and diſorderly living, which brings a man to
 the neceſſity of being a burden to his friends, or the
 public: All miſerly love of money, eſpecially ſuch as
 with-holds relief from the poor, neceſſaries, or conve-
 niencies, from ourſelves, or families: Begging, with-
 out real want; and borrowing, without deſign to re-
 pay.—On the contrary, this law obliges us to Juſtice,
 Equity, Faithfulneſs, and Honeſty. So that, as it
 is levelled againſt all outward acts of covetouſneſs, ſo
 it teaches the virtues of liberality and diligence; and
 is the fence of the rights and poſſeſſions of mankind.

^m Matt. v. 28.

ⁿ 1 Theſſ. iv. 3, 4.

^o Heb. xiii. 4.

Ninth Commandment.

16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.* This law condemns all lying, and untrue speaking, especially in giving testimony, either public, in courts

of justice; or privately, in common cases; all wresting, and misconstruing the actions, words, or meaning of any; all rash censures, and unrighteous judgment; perverting justice thro' favour or prejudice; all partial testimony, concealing or disguising the truth, when lawfully called to give evidence; falsifying records; raising or spreading false reports; tale-bearing, and whispering, backbiting, and covenant-breaking; in a word, all ways of hurting with the tongue.—On the contrary, it commands righteous judgment, true and faithful testimony, speaking the truth from the heart; that is, it provides for the security of our good name; which, the Wise Man tells us, “is rather to be chosen, than “great riches”; and recommends the virtue of sincerity in word and deed.

Tenth Commandment.

17. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours.*

As the other Commands of this Table set rules to our outward actions, this last is to govern the inner man, and to regulate our passions, especially our desires; the affections or desires being the general source, whence our actions flow. So that this precept is intended to govern our thoughts; to root out, or restrain vice in the bud, and suppress the first motions of sin. It forbids all inordinate desire of what is our neighbours; all discontentedness with our own portion; all envy, or repining at the good of others, or unthankfulness for our own; all coveting another man's property, altho' we do no injurious act to obtain it. *Ahab* was guilty of this sin, tho' he offered Na-

both the full value of his vineyard⁹.—On the contrary, this precept binds us to contentment with our lot, our station, our estate; to singleness and disinterestedness of heart, to charitable dispositions, to a generous and ingenuous temper of mind; a love of truth, and frankness of spirit; in a word, to all those noble virtues of magnanimity, magnificence, generosity, largeness of heart, and every heroic virtue; none of which can possibly spring up in the heart, until that root of all evil, the vice of covetousness, be destroyed, and plucked up.—So that this precept is the [*Septum* or] hedge of virtue, yea, of the whole Moral Law; as the First Commandment of the First Table is of all piety and religion.—For, as the true fear of God, if planted in the mind, will effectually promote every religious duty; so the ridding the mind of concupiscence will make way for all the social virtues, and prevent every breach of the Second Table.

19. *And all the people saw the thundrings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off.*

20. *And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*

21. *And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.*

We have observed before, that the law was addressed to our fears, and gendred unto bondage; the Gospel applies to our love, and inviteth to liberty.—When the people saw the *thundrings, and the lightnings, the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they removed and stood afar off*, and cried out, *Let not God speak with us, lest we die*;—yet Moses saith to them, *Fear not*.—What doth this teach us, but that the law must ever precede the gospel, even to Christians, as well as *Jews*?

⁹ 1 Kings xxi. 2.

18. *And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.*

The terrors of the Lord must prepare us for his mercy; and our fears make way for love. According, as it is said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; and again, "Who knoweth the power of his anger? even according to thy fear (*i. e.* the fear of thee) so is thy wrath." So that where the *Jew*, or carnal mind, saw nothing but horror, amazement, and death, there *Moses*, or the spiritual man, sees life and peace, and can say, *Fear not*.—Thus the New Testament, as St. *Augustine* speaks, lay hid in the old, the gospel in the law.—And this procedure seems absolutely necessary; there being no coming to *Christ*, but by such a schoolmaster.—Man, by the effects of original sin, was not only fallen from God, but sunk into a degree of degeneracy below his own proper nature; even from the life of reason to the mere animal and brutal life of sense: He was fallen from his very self, from his character of humanity, as well as the divine image, and spiritual life.—The proper process then for restoring him to that union with God, wherein his happiness and perfection consist, is first to restore him to Himself; to begin with the animal and lower life, and by objects of terror to awaken his senses, and alarm his fears. The *lightning* must flash in his eyes, the *thunder* roar in his ears, the *smoke* ascend, the *fire* flame, the *mountain* tremble; nothing less is sufficient to bring man to himself. The trumpet of God, which is to raise him from the grave, must, by some prelude and forefoundings of temporal judgments, raise him from the death of sin. And happy is he that hath part in this First Resurrection; on such the second Death hath no power!—When by these sensible tokens of Almighty power, the sinner is so far recovered of his spiritual stupor, and begins

to come to the use of reason, by reflecting on his condition, feeling his guilt and misery, dreading the wrath of God (all which is mystically signified to us in the *Israelites removing and standing afar off*); in a word, when we repent; then the word of God, which before spake terror, will speak peace, and bid us *not to fear*.—This is the usual method, which God takes in the conversion of great sinners; and the right model for every preacher of the gospel.—The law must terrify and alarm the conscience: Conscience of sin will lead to repentance; Repentance, to faith; and faith, to the hope of mercy¹.

22. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel; Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.*

23. *Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.*

The pure worship of God being the end of all true religion, immediately after delivery of the law, a caution is added against idolatry, which is the direct contrary to that purity of religion, that spirit and truth, wherein the true worship of God doth consist.—Now idolatry is of two sorts; the one, where images or idols (*i. e.* any visible representations, either of the Deity itself, or of saints or angels, &c.) are made use of in conjunction *with* the worship of God.—This God here calls, *making WITH ME Gods, &c.*—And this was the superstition of the *Samaritans*, who served the LORD, and *Baal*²; and is, at this day, the idolatry of *Papists*.—The other is that proper kind, which the heathens use, of worshipping their false gods by idols, exclusive of the True God: And this, by way of distinction, is here called, *making UNTO us, making to OURSELVES, Gods, &c.* Both these species of idolatry are equally forbidden, and equally absurd;

¹ See on *Hos.* xiv. &c. in Prop. Less. for Wednesday before Easter.

² 2 *Kings* xvii.

and that for the reason, which God himself here gives: *Ye have seen, that I have talked with you from heaven.*—If *from heaven*, then heaven is the place and residence of the True GOD. And if so, what is there upon earth, that can express his likeness, or be worthy to be joined in worship *with* him?—If he be the only True God, that dwelleth in *heaven*; how is it possible he should be made of the materials of earth, be they ever so splendid and rich, *gold, silver*, or precious stones? Or what artist can form him?—Can a creature make his Creator?—Can a child beget his father?—Again, *I have TALKED with you from heaven*: But idols are dumb, they have mouths, but speak not, &c.—The true God not only liveth, but speaketh: He has a Word, and that Word is *from heaven*; even the WORD, which “in the beginning was “with God, and is God,” the eternal Son of the Father, our ever-blessed Redeemer JESUS CHRIST. And if we compare what *Moses* and what *St. Paul* have written concerning him, we shall find, that he that here *talked* with the *Israelites*, and he that now speaketh to us in the gospel, is the same. And where God is, there is *heaven*. Heaven was upon mount *Sinai*, when Christ spake from thence: It was upon earth, even the kingdom of heaven, while he conversed upon earth, and went in and out amongst us. “See then “(as the Apostle exhorts) that ye refuse not him that “speaketh; for if they escaped not, who refused him “[to wit, *Moses*] that spake on earth, much more “shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that “speaketh *from heaven* *.”

24. *An altar of earth* of excess in the worship of
thou shalt make unto me, the true God; which excess
and shalt sacrifice thereon we call superstition.—For
thy burnt-offerings, and thy prevention of this, God pro-
peace-offerings, thy sheep, ceeds to forbid all unnecessary

* Heb. xii. 24, &c.

and thine oxen: In all places where I record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.

pomp, and outward splendor, in his worship; not only as this was wont to be used by the heathens, but as it served more to attract the eye, and affect the imagination, than to help devotion, and raise the affections to God. We may also say, this was here enjoined to the *Israelites*, as more suitable to their then unsettled state in the wilderness. But if we attend to the mystical sense of this precept, it represents how acceptable those devotions are, which are offered up with humility, and lowliness of heart. These virtues, being founded in poverty of spirit, and the considerations of our meanness, and original production out of the *earth*, have more real worth in the sight of God, than any external shew of cost and magnificence.—It intimates to us, that man at best is but a clod of *earth*, raised a very small matter above his fellow-creatures, offsprings of the same dust. And if, on these humble sentiments, this *altar of earth*, we sacrifice our *burnt-offerings*, of praise and thanksgiving, our *peace-offerings*, of repentance; our *sheep* and our *oxen*; *i. e.* the alms and oblations wherewith we feed and relieve the poor; and especially if these things be done *in the place where God records his Name*; *i. e.* in unity and communion with his church; there and then, we are assured, he *will come unto us, and bless us*. But more especially, if, from humility, we pass to an act of faith in Christ, and consider this *earthen altar* as the emblem of his sacred humanity^y; that he humbled himself to the dust, by assuming our nature; that he is our true *altar*, as well as priest; and if on him, and by him, our sacrifices be offered up to God; “we may then come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace, to help in time of need^z.”

^y Emblem of his sacred humanity.] See note on *Zechariah*, chap ix. ver. 16. first Lesson for morning prayer for *Easter* even.

^z *Heb.* iv. 15. and chap. xiii. 10.

25. *And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.*

An altar of stone is also permitted to be made, on condition it be not made of hewn stone, but plain, simple, and inartificial.—Stone is but earth petrified, and hardened into a more solid

substance: So that the doctrine is the same with the foregoing; the same humility is still required in our devotions. And as by the plainness of the altar all hypocrisy is forbidden; so, by the firmness and solidity of stone, we may understand not only that steadiness of faith, wherewith our devotions are ever to be accompanied, but that this faith is to be founded on *Jesus Christ*, who is the Rock of our salvation, the chief corner stone of his church; the “stone cut out of the mountain without hands^a.” That therefore we must receive this stone, tho’ unpolished and unhewn, yet elect of God, and precious, with simplicity, and godly sincerity; not as the work of man, or any worldly device, but as the truth is in Jesus, without adding to, or diminishing from it, or shaping it to our own carnal fancies. If we lift up our tool upon it, either to alter the primitive form, as it was once delivered to the saints, and attempt to smooth off the native plainness of it; or, with the noisy strokes of controversy, and disputes, disturb the peace and quiet of the church; we shall thereby pollute and deprave it.

And as the worship of God must be in spirit and in truth, with an humility free from superstition, and a faith without wavering, or any human intermixtures; so

26. *Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon^b.*

^a Dan. iv. 45.

^b It may be objected, that the altar of Solomon was ten cubits high; and that the altar also, which is described by Ezekiel xli. 22. was to be three cubits high. But interpreters conceive, that the

so must it also be conducted with the strictest decency. —The God of order requires, that “all things be done Decently, and according to Order^c ;” much more ought his service to be so performed. —Nothing can be more repugnant to devotion, and the spirit of prayer, than impure thoughts : To prevent therefore any the least indecorum, which might suggest such loose ideas, is the tenour and design of this precautionary precept.

The same law, and founded on the same reason, obtained even among the heathen. Their altars were to have no more than three steps of ascent. In this and some other instances relating to the public worship of God, we perceive an harmony between natural and revealed religion ; which may hint to us, that originally, and in their first source, they were the same ; and ought not to be divided, or put asunder. For what is the religion of nature, but that homage, which by nature, and their necessary dependence on the Creator, all rational creatures, as well angels as men, are bound to pay to him, as the author of their being, and consequently their supreme Lord and Sovereign, according to their respective states and conditions ? And what is revealed religion among men, but a republication of the law of nature, with certain sanctions and conditions superadded thereto, suitable to our present lapsed and frail estate ? But the great and ultimate end both of nature and revelation, being to love and serve God, is altogether the same ; yea, ever was and ever will continue so to be. They who perceive not this, whether our modern naturalists, who reject revelation, or enthusiasts, who slight the religion of nature, shew plainly, that they understand neither the one nor the other.

ascent to these altars was not by steps, but by a gentle rising like a rampire, or slope ; by which the indecorum here provided against in our Lesson, was effectually prevented : So that the highest part from the basis was but low.

^c 1 Cor. xiv. 40. *ὡςχημένως, καὶ κατὰ τάξιν.*



TUESDAY in EASTER-WEEK.

Second Proper Lesson for Morning Prayer.

LUKE, Chap. xxiv. to Ver. 13.

I. *NOW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared; and certain others with them.*

THIS Lesson not only relates the History of Christ's Resurrection, but shews us, at the same time, in the conduct and behaviour of those holy women who visited his Sepulchre; and were the first witnesses of his rising from the dead; with what sentiments, and pious dispositions of mind, we ought to celebrate this holy Festival; and thereby secure to ourselves an interest in the blessings and benefits of our Lord's Resurrection.—In these pious Women we observe, that the first step towards an happy participation therein, is, to come to his Tomb; to seek him in his Death; that is, to come to his Sacraments, which are the symbols of his Passion. If, in Baptism, we are buried with him; at his Supper we shall rise and Feast with him. But then, we must still imitate these good women; bring *the Spices we have prepared, i. e.* those graces and good works, which are of a sweet flavour, acceptable to the Lord.—We are also to come *Early*; that is, not only in the prime and morning of Life, but with Diligence and Earnest-

ness, ardent Love, and holy Zeal. All sloth must be shaken off, when we come to seek Christ : Especially on the *First day of the week*, the standing memorial of his Resurrection ; the Day which he the Lord hath made ; and called by his own most holy Name ;—and we shall then be sure to find him.

2. *And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.* These pious women had attended his Burial ; had seen the sepulchre, and how his body was laid ; had observed what a large *stone* was placed

on the mouth of the grave. But we do not find they made any reflection on the difficulty of removing that stone, till after they had prepared their spices, and were on their way to the tomb.—Fervent Love is apt to overlook all Obstacles, and thinks nothing hard, that stands in the way to Christ.—And when it begins to reflect, it doth not stop, it still persists, still goes on : And then has the comfort and happiness to find the *Stone rolled away* ; the Difficulty removed. All impediments shall vanish before those, who are led by a lively Faith, and a sincere desire, to come to *Jesus*.

3. *And they entred in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.* Though their zeal was great, their faith was yet imperfect ; they loved Christ, tho' dead (as they thought), and in his grave ; they came

to pay their last respects to him, whom, in life, they had so much honoured and esteemed ;—but they *found him not* :—A grievous, and yet an happy, Disappointment ! Had they found his body still dead, they, and all mankind, had been lost for ever.—But as he was Risen, and they found him not in his grave, they and we are saved and happy !—Thus it often happens, that we are blessed by what we imagine to be our greatest Affliction.—We had many times been quite undone, had we not (according to our own mistaken apprehensions) been so undone. Therefore
Sr.

St. Paul reasons perfectly right, when he saith, " I
" rejoice in mine infirmities; for when I am weak,
" then am I strong."

4. *And it came to pass,
as they were much perplexed
thereabout, behold, two men
stood by them in shining gar-
ments.*

We behold here a lively
picture of the simpleness and
ignorance of mankind in ge-
neral; even the wisest and
best of men are naturally
blind to their true interest:

They often grieve, and are
perplexed, at what they should rejoice; and they joy
in what they should lament. Howbeit, where the
Principle is right, and the Desire is directed to a good
End, God will never fail to bring the same to a good
Effect.—Though he may not send them real *Angels*
or comforters from Heaven, as he did to these good
women; he will cause them to meet with Angels
upon earth, for their support and consolation.—
He hath established it as a certain and constant rule,
" That all who seek shall find."

5. *And as they were
afraid, and bowed down
their faces to the earth, they
said unto them, Why seek ye
the living among the dead?*

Here those pious seekers
of Christ are set right. They
were not, neither are we, to
seek him as still *dead*, but
as having Once died, and
Now alive.—He that died
once for our sins, is now

risen again for our justification ^a.—And, as He is
our only Happiness, our sovereign Good, they that
seek him in the things of the world, in the pleasures,
enjoyments, or comforts, of this life, do but *seek the
living among the dead*. They that seek him in the
honours and glory of this earth, or the reasonings of
philosophy, and human learning, are still *seeking the
living among the dead*. Christ is not here, but is risen;
as said the angel; *risen*, far above all such beggarly
elements as these.—He is now no-where to be found,

^a Rom. iv. 25.

but in his own Word, by an humble Faith, and the participation of his Holy Spirit, in the sacred Mysteries of Religion.

6. *He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.*

7. *Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again,*

divine life springing up in their hearts, find that He is *Risen indeed*.—His sacred word shall then become a lively oracle, and speak to their hearts; remind them of his Promises, direct their Faith, and open their understanding, to conceive aright the design and necessity, the end and benefits of his Passion and Resurrection.—And what are the Angels who here instruct these holy women in these important points of the Christian doctrine, but emblems of those Angels of the Churches, the Clergy and Ministers of our holy religion?

8. *And they remembered his words:*

So we often read the Scriptures, and hear the Word preached; but it makes no Impression on our hearts, till these hearts of ours are softened by an approach to our Saviour's tomb, and a serious meditation on his Sufferings; then we *remember*, and call to mind, his word; because we feel it.

9. *And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.*

Whoever comes to the Cross and Grave of Christ; that is, begins by Mortification, and the discipline of penitential sorrow, to conform himself to the image and sufferings of Christ; shall assuredly find him *risen* from the dead.—Such persons shall, by a powerful efficacy of the new and di-

These words they knew, and had heard before; but they understood them not;

So we often read the Scriptures, and hear the Word preached; but it makes no Impression on our hearts, till these hearts of ours are softened by an approach to our Saviour's tomb, and a serious meditation on his Sufferings; then we *remember*, and call to mind, his word; because we feel it.

These women had more courage than the Apostles; because they had more Love and Zeal for their Lord; they are therefore honoured with

10. *It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.*

with the first news of Christ's Resurrection; and they first preach it to his Disciples. — Love is ever the best scholar in the school of Christ: Love teaches more than all the learning of the world; makes the simplest wiser than the aged, yea, wiser than their teachers. Such teachers may know more, yet love less. — The greatest Doctors may learn from the tender Sex the art of divine Love: It is observable, that their Love to God is often stronger than that of Men. — And as Woman was first in the transgression, and caused our Fall, it was the gracious will of Heaven, that Woman should have the happy opportunity of repairing her fault, not only by bringing Christ into the world, but bearing the first tidings of his being raised again: And as the Woman had been the first messenger of Death to Man, so was she also of Life and Joy, of Peace and Salvation.

11. *And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.*

12. *Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.*

If Peter wondered in himself at that which was come to pass, well may we wonder at the Diffidence and Incredulity of him, and the rest of the Apostles. But, alas! how apt are we all to regard idle Tales, as Truths; and the greatest Truths, as idle Tales! Happy had it been if our first parents had so received the glozing lyes of the

grand Deceiver, as the very Apostles now received the report of these good women concerning our Lord's Resurrection. — Nevertheless, as Faith is the sole gift of God, we may presume it was the will and wisdom of Heaven to leave the Apostles, at this time, to the blindness and prejudice of mere human Reason, which was not able of itself to conceive, therefore could

not believe, that a resurrection from the dead was, in fact, either true or possible. The form of the expression, here used, points to us the cause of such disbelief.—*Peter wondred* IN HIMSELF, that is, he consulted only his own reason, and therefore wondred so much at a thing his Reason thought impossible. Now this difficulty of Belief in the Apostles, nay, this seeming Unwillingness to believe, was permitted of Providence, not only to clear them from all imputation of Collusion; and to obviate that forged pretence of the *Jews*, that they had any hand in removing the body out of the sepulchre; but to render the truth of our Lord's Resurrection so evident and clear as might baffle the strongest prejudice, and silence every objection of natural reason.—And this was the more necessary, that so a Fact, whereon the certainty of the Christian Religion is chiefly built, should be proved to be incontestably true; and that the Apostles especially, should be convinced in the most undoubted manner of a Truth whereof they were to be the Witnesses and Preachers to all the world.





TUESDAY in EASTER-WEEK.

First Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

EXODUS, Chap. xxxii.

CONTENTS.

On the long stay of Moses in the mount, the people grow impatient. They prevail on Aaron to make them a golden calf, and commit idolatry.—God is displeased, but Moses intercedes for them. He breaks the two tables that were in his hand, destroys the calf, expostulates with Aaron. Aaron's apology. The Levites, by command, slay the idolaters; and are rewarded for their zeal with the perpetual honour of the Priesthood. Moses represents to the people the great heinousness of their sin; and intercedes again with God for them.

1. **A**ND when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him,

BY this we see the little sincerity there was in those promises, which the Israelites had made, of faithful obedience to God, when they engaged in covenant with

Up, make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

with him, chap. xix. 8.— But if we look into ourselves, we shall find no less inconsistency and unfaithfulness in our most solemn vows. As they relapsed, so do we, and in as shameful a manner,

when we return to the sins we renounced.—The cause of our revolt is also the same, namely, when our faith fails, and we follow not our faithful Ministers, (at least in heart) to the mount of God; or, as St. Peter expresses it, when “we grow blind, and cannot see “far off, and have forgotten that we were purged “from our old sins^b,” that is, when we attend not to the obligations of our baptismal vow.

2. *And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.*

3. *And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings, which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.*

4. *And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving-tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

5. *And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before*

But if such revolts from God, and violations of our holy Covenant, be most criminal and shameful, though too common, in every Christian, how astonishing and horrible, in the Clergy and Governors of the Church, is Apostasy, and falling away from God! If such pillars are capable of being shaken, and thrown down, well may we tremble at our danger.—Some interpret this compliance of Aaron with the people, in a favourable sense, as an effect of fear. But such cowardice, and base fear, was no less impious in him, than downright infidelity and idolatry were in the people: Nay, was

^b 2 Pet. i. 9.

it, and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow is a feast to the LORD.

6. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people sat down to eat, and to drink, and rose up to play.

far more inexcusable: And may teach us these two lessons for preserving a constant humble diffidence in ourselves, on any adventitious advantages in private or public life: First, That man in himself, though never so great in dignity or knowledge, is still no more than man, a poor frail fallible creature. And, Secondly, That particular Churches, yea, the very church of Christ, as a body consisting of fallible men, and of many parts, may err, and, in many things, have erred; as our pious Church in her Articles^c, without excepting herself, hath humbly acknowledged.—Some members of our natural body may be distempered, though the rest be sound: So particular Churches may fall, and many have fallen, into dangerous errors. How presumptuous then must it be for the church of Rome (which is but a Member, yea, a corrupted member, of the Catholic Church), or her pretended visible head, to arrogate to herself an Infallibility, when we plainly see she hath fallen into the very same crime which the Church in the wilderness fell into under the eye, and even with the concurrence, of the very High-Priest Aaron! Infomuch that we may truly say, this shameful defection of the *Israelites* into idolatry was a Type and Prognostic of the like grievous error in the church of Rome.—But, for the honour of our own more excellent Church, we may not omit to observe, That the zeal and act of *Moses* in destroying the *golden calf*, and rebuking the sin of his brother *Aaron*, was as lively an emblem of our Reformation from the errors and corruptions of the *Roman Church*.

To confirm the parallel still more between those antient and these modern idolaters, it is very remark-

^c See Art. xix. and xxi.

able, that as *Aaron* and his company, called the dedication of their calf a *Feast unto the LORD*, pretending, even still, to worship the Lord; and that this Image (which, according to *Egyptian* divinity, represented strength and power) was a proper hieroglyphic and emblem of the true God; so the very like pretence is alledged, as proper means of instruction to the people, for justifying the use of Image-worship among Christians. The ground, the doctrine, the practice, are alike in both; and so also is the sin; but the guilt in Christians must needs be much more heinous and inexcusable.

7. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down: for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.*

8. *They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*

The proud heart of man (especially in these our degenerate days, when there never was greater pretence to perfection, and yet never was there less of true religion) cannot be too often put in mind of the extreme wretchedness and frailty of human nature. We see it, as often as we look impartially into ourselves: We see it, as in a glass, in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly, in this history before us of the *Israelites* in the wilderness.—

Just before *Moses* left them to ascend into the mount, they had, in the most solemn manner, promised obedience to all the laws of God: “All the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words, which the LORD hath said, will we do.”—And again, they ratify and confirm the same vow and promise; “All that the LORD hath said, will we do, and be obedient.” And yet, in less than a month’s time, this solemn, this re-

* See Chap. xix. 8. and xxiv. 3.

peated, promise is shamefully forgotten and broken : Is not this the character and picture of us all ? After the most sacred and solemn vow made in baptism, renewed in confirmation, repeated over and over at the Lord's table, do we not as shamefully fall back into our old sins, *turn aside quickly out of the way which God commanded*, and which we promised to walk in all the days of our life ? Alas ! in this state of imperfection it is too certain, that our best resolutions are but as a foot out of joint^c, not only without strength, but, when set, is soon dislocated, and broken again ; or, like a person in a fever, subject to frequent intermissions and relapses. If now full of zeal ; our zeal is but short lived, a mere hot fit, distempered at best ; by-and-by, as cold a fit succeeds, and there remains scarce warmth enough to preserve life. If again we revive, we soon faint again, and sink into deadness again, cold and lukewarm, if not into a downright insensibility of God, and our duty ! This is our common state, and these our manners. And, if God's infinite mercy and goodness bear with this wretched inconstancy, let it, at least, inspire us with an humble sense and abhorrence of our sins and imperfections, and a more diligent striving against such frequent relapses, and the sin that doth so easily beset us ; yea, let it constrain us to kindle in our hearts more ardent degrees of gratitude, and love, and obedience, for such unmerited forbearances of the divine favour and compassion.

9. *And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.*

10. *Now therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and*

We read of many provocations of the *Israelites* against God since their coming out of *Egypt*, namely, at the *Red Sea*, at *Massab* and *Meribab*, at *Rephidim*, &c. But till now, we do not read, that God was angry with

^c Prov. xxv.

them,

that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. them, or that his *wrath wax- ed so hot* against them, as to threaten punishment.—

This, indeed, is agreeable to the benign nature of God, who suffers long, and is kind; is not easily provoked; is slow to anger, and of great pity. But it may be of use to consider, that, in the case of these *Israelites*, we may observe, he always proportions his judgments to the nature and heinousness of mens sins. He deals not with us on the maxims of that Gentile philosophy, which made all sins equal, but according to the different degree of their guilt, making all due allowances for our infirmities and temptations: So that, from the accounts we find in Scripture of his dealings with sinners, we may make the justest estimate of the nature and guilt of sin. Hence it is, that God is more incensed at the *Israelites* idolatry, than at any of their former offences. Their frequent murmurings, though expressed in terms highly provoking; yet, as the ground of their complaints was founded in nature, and natural necessity, God seemed to excuse them, imputing their profane expostulations to the real exigence of their pressing wants, and no visible means of relief. This consideration, though it justify not, because it argues a great weakness of faith, yet is ever admitted of a good and gracious God, as an extenuation of our faults.

But how is this, that God is so incensed as to threaten his people with utter destruction, and *Moses* so tender-hearted as to pity, and intercede for them? Is man more merciful than God?—Although this might raise a plausible objection against the benignity of the Divine Na-

11. *And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?*

12. *Wherefore should the*

Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

13. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou sweardest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

14. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Nature; yet God is pleased to have this transaction recorded in his book. But when we attentively look into this circumstance, we shall descry two very important truths, two grand mysteries of divine philanthropy, and love to mankind. First, That God's justice, though slow, yet slumbereth not; but his mercy is ever at hand to interpose and plead for sinful man: Secondly, That retributive justice is in God alone, according to that saying, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." But Mercy is in man also, even a property and attribute of the human nature, hence commonly

called humanity: But is more particularly so through the influence and inhabitation of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love and goodness, the only author of grace, who worketh all our works in us.—This was the principle, which moved *Moses* to intercede for *Israel*: So that the mercy, which appeared in him, was no less the act of God, than that *wrath* which *waxed hot* in him to have consumed them.—The further, and still higher, mystery, which lies couched in this passage, is the incarnation of our blessed Redeemer. Mercy speaking in man, and interceding for man, was a most lively emblem and type of the holy and compassionate *Jesus*, the Mediator between God and man; as the Word made flesh, as God in man.

This manner of writing on both sides we find also in other mystical books (see *Eze-*

mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.

16. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

hearts before God: See *Matt. v. 16. Heb. viii. 10. Rom. ii. 28. and 29.*—These tables were the work of God; as also the writing was. And herein they differed from the second tables, which were the work of Moses; chap. xxxiv. 1.; which intimates to us, that the first law given to man was inscribed on the heart by the immediate Finger or Spirit of God, as the law of nature: The second law, or gospel (which is the law of Grace), was given us by *Jesus Christ*, who was man as well as God, and a prophet like unto Moses.

17. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people, as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.

18. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing, do I hear.

Mark viii. 32. And here Joshua delivers his opinion, that the noise he heard in the camp, was a noise of war.

But

Ezekiel, ii. 10. Revel. v. 1.).

It signified, with respect to the law itself, that it hath both the outward letter, and an internal spiritual meaning; see *Rom. vii. 14. Gal. iv. 24.*

With respect to men it denotes, that the law should be written outwardly, and legible in their actions before men, and inwardly in their

The younger are too apt to be conceited of the quickness of their apprehension, and to think themselves more sharp-sighted and sensible than their teachers, or those who are elder. We see instances of this even in our Lord's disciples, who sometimes thought themselves wiser than their Master: See *Luke viii. 45.* Nay, Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, &c. as we read

But *Moses*, not only as inspired, but as elder, and therefore of greater experience, as well as having his senses more exercised to discern good and evil, judged more truly of the case, and pronounced it to be what it really was, *the noise of them that sung*.—This should be a lesson of modesty to young people, and teach them to pay a respectful deference to the judgment and experience of their elders.

19. *And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.*

As *Moses* judged, so it proved to be, the mirth of Sinners, rioting and rejoicing in their wickedness. But as the cause, so the end, of such mirth is heaviness. — Our Lord hath pronounced a woe to such laughter as is excited by the pleasures of sin. — *Moses's anger waxed hot*.—O anger, saith St. *Augustine*, worthy of a prophet! proceeding not from passion, but the clear light of truth!—And the holy man spake not to that gross and carnal people so much by words, as by action: *He cast down the tables, and brake them*. He would have them see, at least, if they could not apprehend the extreme guilt of the sin they had committed; even to see with their eyes how they had broken the Divine Law, and that covenant they had so lately made with God; yea, that God also, in consequence of such breach, had likewise broken and annulled his part of the covenant with them:—See on *Jer. xxxi. 32*.

In this act of *Moses* we see the pattern of that zeal, whichevery magistrate ought to shew against all flagrant and open violations of God's law: That they are not only to punish offenders, but to remove the cause.—For

21. *And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?*

22. *And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief.*

23. *For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

24. *And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off: So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.*

Moses, single and alone, to take their golden calf, and destroy it before their faces, was an example of a noble and undaunted resolution, which ought to animate all the acts of persons in authority, especially in the cause of God. But his grinding gold to powder, and making the people drink of it, hath something supernatural and miraculous in it; and, as the Jewish doctors say, had also a supernatural effect on those who were most concerned in the crime; causing, say they, their lips to swell, or, by some outward symptoms, marking out the most guilty. Nor seems this improbable, from the execution of the three thousand of them, slain

by the Levites, at the command of Moses; it being very reasonable to believe, that they were directed whom they were to slay, by some such token appearing on the parties that were most guilty.—The excuse which Aaron makes, is a very lame one, and such as would not have exempted him from the divine vengeance, had not Moses interceded for him, as we read he did, Deut. ix. 10. The plea which some have offered, in extenuation of his fault; namely, to prevent the people's return into Egypt; was, in truth, doing evil, that good might come, and therefore no way justifiable.

25. *And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame, amongst their enemies)*

26. *Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.*

27. *And he said unto them, thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour [i. e. That is guilty, without respect of persons, relation, or friendship].*

28. *And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.*

29. *For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.*

The nakedness of the people was not owing so much to their being stript of their gold ornaments, and the breaking of the gold ear-rings which were in the ears of their wives, &c. as to the loss of their innocence, the ornament and blessing of God's presence and protection. They were become naked, as *Adam* and *Eve* were by their fall. This *Moses* saw, and saw it to their shame amongst their enemies, though they saw it not themselves; like the lukewarm *Lacedaemonians*, they "knew not that they were wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked".—Thus exposed, and thus deserted of God, the consequence must have been (as *Moses* plainly saw it would) not only of becoming an easy prey to their enemies, but God's total rejection of them from being any more his people; nay, utterly consuming them, as he had threatened, ver. 10. To prevent therefore these greatest of all evils, *Moses*, like a wise magistrate, and a faithful minister of God, chooses an expedient, though seemingly very severe, yet by far the most merciful

• Rev. iii. 17.

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and

and advantageous; which was, to put the chief offenders to death; that so the divine majesty, being appeased by so seasonable an act of justice, might be moved to spare the rest, and to receive that people again into favour and protection.—Taking it in this true light, the whole proceeding will appear worthy of G O D, and worthy of *Moses*; yea, altogether consistent with that mercy which is God's darling attribute, and that meekness which distinguished the character of *Moses*.—G O D was the King of *Israel*, in a political, as well as spiritual sense, and *Moses* his vicegerent. So public an act of idolatry was an open rebellion, and high treason, against the Divine Majesty, a crime universally punishable with death: And had not *Moses* brought the criminals to justice, his indulgence to them would have proved, in the end, no less fatal to the people, than it was traitorous and faithless towards God. And we find, that in the esteem of God (which is ever the surest criterion and rule for framing our judgment concerning good and evil) so heinous was this sin of the people of *Israel*, that, notwithstanding the execution of three thousand men, and the other punishments whereby God plagued them for this crime; yea, notwithstanding the earnest intercession of *Moses* on their behalf; the Lord, as we read in the following chapter, refuses to go any more with the people.—All idolatry is an actual forsaking of God; no wonder then if he forsake those who commit it.—May his grace evermore preserve us from every kind of so dangerous a crime!

30. *And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for our sins.*

We here see, not only the true spirit of charity towards offenders, but the right order and method, that is necessary to be observed for restoring them to the favour of God; and doing them that real good, which our charity desires,

fires,

fires, or ever should desire and intend. To profess forgiveness to an offending brother by our words, or by silence to pass by, and overlook his fault, may be sufficient to acquit our debt of charity, and to remit his trespass, when it is against ourselves only. But when the offence is chiefly against GOD, there we must follow this example of *Moses*; first, convince him of his sin, and make him sensible of his fault, that so he may repent: Otherwise our pardon or excuse will do him no good; nay, it will do him harm: Like an unskilful physician, that hastily heals up the wound, without first cleansing and probing the sore. —All that are in authority are more particularly concerned in this case, and should imitate the conduct of *Moses*; first convince, then correct, and then intercede with God for mercy: This is the right order of true charity; but the world generally acts quite otherwise, and inverts this order: Men forgive the highest offences against God, but forgive not the smallest against themselves.—We may also observe the prudence of *Moses*, in timing his speech to the people. He doth not sharply chide, and then immediately fall to soft words. No: He gives them time to reflect on their sin, and the threatnings of God: Then, *on the morrow*, he promises to intercede; and gives them hopes of mercy: and that too (because their crime was so very great) but with a *peradventure*.—*I will go up unto the LORD: Peradventure I shall make an atonement for you.*

31. *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.*

32. *Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee,*

To set this wonderful intercession, and prayer of charity, in its full light, would take up more time and room than the intended brevity of these remarks will admit of.

—Whatever acts of generosity, public or private, towards friends or country, we

out of the book which thou hast written.

33. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

34. *Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: Behold mine angel shall go before thee: Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.*

35. *And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf which Aaron made.*

ever heard of in the world before the coming of Christ, none ever came up to this of *Moses*. As he is the first, so he is the only one we meet with in all antiquity, whose heroic charity carried the love of others to such an height, as to exceed the very love of self; and that in an instance as far superior to all other considerations, as eternal life and happiness is superior to all temporal concerns. For that is the import of *Moses's* amazing choice, to be himself blotted out of God's book of life, and lost for

ever, rather than his brethren, rather than *Israel*, should be cast off and destroyed.—We find indeed the same noble generosity in *St. Paul*, who could have wished himself accursed from Christ, if that would have saved his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, *Rom. ix. 3.*—Such flights of charity are inconceivable to worldly minds; a degree of love, that nature is neither capable of, nor thinks it possible for any man to attain to, or sincerely to profess. But the great exemplar of divine love, the holy *Jesus*, whose good-will towards mankind we at this time celebrate, and by whose Spirit these holy men spake, gives us the true and only solution to this astonishing paradox of love. What they wished, and were content, to undergo for their brethrens sakes, he actually and willingly underwent. He gave himself up to the most exquisite sufferings in body and mind; to be forsaken of God, to death, yea, to Hell, for the love he bare to mankind, and that he might save us from thence.—But then, we

are also told, it was impossible he should be holden of those chains: God was pleased to raise him again to life and glory.—Where God sees the pious advocate for others transported to such hyperboles of divine charity, as to resign his own eternal interests in behalf of others, he takes him not at his word; he accepts not the costly offer, but the will for the deed. As, in the case of unjust imprecations, he turns the curse on the head of the spiteful malignant; so when the love of our neighbour's soul gives up our own most interesting blessings, those very blessings shall revert with accumulated advantage on ourselves.





TUESDAY in EASTER-WEEK.

Second Proper Lesson for Evening Prayer.

I COR. Chap. xv.

1. *Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand;*

2. *By which also ye are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

means of salvation. These are things we should never forget, but constantly *keep in memory*, with a spirit of gratitude and acknowledgment.

3. *For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures :*

4. *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.*

HOW many different graces and favours have we received, which we do not often enough reflect upon!—First, The mission of the Apostles.—Secondly, Their preaching.—Thirdly, Our vocation.—Fourthly, The gift of faith.—Fifthly, Of perseverance.—Sixthly, Our deliverance from sin and misery, with all the

The *Scriptures*, as delivered to us by the Church, contain the rule of faith; the sacred depositum of this faith, *received from Christ* by his apostles, and delivered to us, is summed up in the articles of our Creed. This creed, as oft as we rehearse it, should be in the spirit of

of faith, adoration, and love.—Every article is full of mysteries; and every mystery is a law, a rule, and a pattern, for our life and conversation.—The *death* and *passion* of Christ engage us to die to sin, to the world, and to ourselves; his *burial* instructs us to renounce the world, and all occasions of sin; his *resurrection*, to lead a new life, and aspire after that which is immortal in the world to come.

5. *And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.*

6. *After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.*

7. *After that, he was seen of James^a; then of all the apostles.*

8. *And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time.*

9. *For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

10. *But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they*

The apostles and first believers in Christ were the first witnesses of his *resurrection*: Besides the five hundred who were present at once, as eye-witnesses thereof, St. Peter, St. James, and St. Paul, are named as special evidences; the first, as the known apostle of the Jews; James, as the first bishop of Jerusalem; and Paul, as the apostle of the Gentiles, by divine appointment.

The more God raises and exalts the saints, the more they humble and abase themselves: This kind of opposition to his will he not only forgives, but approves.—

The eminency of grace appears most genuine and complete, when we turn away our eyes from our own merits, and ascribe all to divine grace.—When our

^a See note at the end.

all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

apostle looks at the extraordinary privileges and advantages of his high station,

he forgets not to reflect what he had been, and what he was of himself; but when the interests of God are concerned, he thinks of nothing but the power of grace. Of a persecutor to be made an *apostle*, was an high privilege, and most extraordinary *grace*.—

But, alas! how fatal an apostasy must it be for an apostle^b to turn a persecutor! And this he doth, who abuses his authority, his ministry, his great talents, or example, to the detriment of the Church.—

The Church of God may be persecuted more ways than one.

11. *Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.*

This is an abridgment of the doctrines which St. Paul, and the other apostles, had taught, but more particularly that of the resurrection of Christ, and hereafter of all mankind in general: The first he proceeds to prove by reason, as he had before by evidence; and then asserts and proves the certainty and reality of a general resurrection.

12. *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

13. *But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen.*

14. *And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*

If the *resurrection of the dead* be a fundamental point of the whole Christian Religion, and founded on the ocular testimony, and unanimous doctrine, of its first preachers, this is sufficient to prove it to be the faith of the universal Church.—To contradict it therefore, or deny it, must needs be falling away from the faith which was once delivered to

^b *An apostle.*] That is, any pastor, or chief governor in the Church.

15. *Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.*

16. *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:*

17. *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

18. *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished.*

yet in our sins; i. e. are still under the sentence of death and condemnation, which passed on Adam:—In effect, we give up the apostles, and first preachers of the gospel, as lyars and impostors, when we forsake the doctrines they taught; and condemn all that believed them, as reprobates, and objects of perdition.

19. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*

We, that is, we Christians, are the most unhappy of all men; not only we preachers of the gospel, for teaching an untruth, but every Christian that believes it, should it prove an untruth. We, who renounce the world, and all earthly advantages, would be the most miserable of any people, had we no prospect and hope of a better life.—The belief of the soul's immortality, and the firm assurance of the resurrection of the body, not only reconcile us to the want of those comforts, which the world enjoys, or bestows, but to the heaviest afflictions, and severest sufferings, which it can bring upon us.—But as all the conveniences

niciencies and pleasures of this life cannot wholly secure a man from the evils of it, much less can they keep him from being truly *miserable*, while he is in a state of guilt and unbelief; so, on the other hand, all the sufferings a man can undergo in this world, cannot make him unhappy, while he maintains a stedfast belief and expectation of happiness in the world to come.

Here St. Paul, waving,

20. *But now is Christ as it were, the powers of risen from the dead, and oratory to persuade, assumes become the first-fruits of the character of an evidence, of them that slept.* as well as an apostle, to evince

the certainty of Christ's resurrection from the dead: This he affirms in a positive and peremptory manner [*Christ is risen from the dead;*] and, by adding, that he is *become the first-fruits of them that slept*, he as plainly asserts our own.—

The apostle by comparing the body of Christ, *dead and buried*, to a grain of wheat, which, being cast into the ground, bringeth forth much fruit; and his rising from thence full of glory, and living to God, to the *first-fruits* of the harvest; most aptly reminds us, by this similitude, both of a timely conversion from sin, and lifting up our minds to heaven and heavenly things, as the heave-offering of the harvest was lifted up to God^c. And as Christ was the *first-fruits* of the heavenly seed, O may we be the harvest!

The knowledge of *Adam* and *Christ* (that is, the knowledge and belief of original sin, by the fall of *Adam*, and of our redemption by the death and resurrection of *Christ*) constitutes the whole science of the Christian Religion,

^c See Leviticus xxiii. ver. 10, 11.

lligion.—By our vow in baptism, of renouncing the world and the flesh, we profess the renouncing of *Adam*, his corruption and sin.—By our profession of faith and obedience, we devote ourselves to Christ, and to the guidance of his Spirit, and an holy life. The fatal consequence of *Adam's* fall was our death; the happy effect of Christ's rising from death must as necessarily be the raising mankind to life again; his suffering the penalty of man's transgression has fully expiated the guilt, and discharged the debt.

23. *But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christs, at his coming.*

If we consider the *order* here spoken of, as relative to Time, it stands to reason, that Christ, the head of the elect, should precede, and be the first beginner of the resurrection; and *afterwards*, they that are *Christ's* (*i. e.* Christians) that they should follow *at his coming*.—When the head appears, it is natural for the body to follow, and appear also:—But if we consider *order*, with regard to the rank which will be assigned to his members at his appearing; the disposition of this will be admirable, both for comeliness of order, and strictness of justice: Every one will then be stationed according to their respective behaviour in the time of life.—The measure of charity, labour, and sufferings, will be that of glory.

24. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.*

25. *For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

In vain do men labour to acquire settlements, and establish themselves here upon earth: An end, even *the end* of all things, will soon come.—The very mediatorial kingdom of Christ will then have an end, and be delivered up to God, even *the Father*. Of course all the schemes and contrivances of men,

26. *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

27. *For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest, that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.*

28. *And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

of the law of grace, God transacted by his Son Jesus Christ, who was sent to reduce men to obedience, and to restore the kingdom of his Father.—But, in heaven, God will do *all things* by himself, and be *all in all*.—When Christ shall have finished his work, and gathered his saints together, and presented them to his Father, there will then be no more mediation or sacrifice for sin; no more ministrations of men, no further need of Scriptures, nor of any external means of religion:—God (that is, the Godhead, or ever-blessed Trinity) will then reign for ever, without any distinction of personal offices; and so consummate his Church in perfect unity, happiness, and love, that (according to our Lord's prayer for his disciples, in *John* the xviith) “They may be one, as He and “his Father are one.”

29. *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?*

men, all the works of sin and Satan, will then be destroyed, and brought to nought; and nothing subsist, or remain in force, but the supreme power, and sovereign will of God.—In the state of innocence, God conversed with man immediately and by himself; but sin soon changed all things: In the state of nature, and law of *Moses*, this intercourse between God and man was by mediation of angels and men: In the state

To prove the reality of the resurrection, the apostle appeals to a known custom in those times, of persons being *baptized for the dead*; which, though a superstitious

tious practice, was yet an argument that a resurrection was a current opinion, and the general belief of all that called themselves Christians. For why should any (not only orthodox persons, but others) so earnestly desire baptism, as even to use it *for their dead* friends, unless they all believed a *resurrection*, and had an undoubted hope, that the body would be raised again?—Grant, O Lord, that the very mistakes of others, concerning baptism, may put me on right apprehensions of the nature and obligations of my own! That as I was then raised from a spiritual death, to a new and holy life, I may ever attend to the holiness and engagements of my baptismal vow.

30. *And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?*

31. *I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*

preachers *every hour*, and their contempt of the present life; yea, their *dying daily* by mortification and continual sufferings for the gospel; could not but be a convincing argument of their undoubted belief of the resurrection; and therefore the apostle adds further,

32. *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

ourselves, as long as we live, our carnal appetites and passions, which must be daily *fought* with.—That the life of man is short, is a maxim no less owned in the school of *Epicurus*, than of Christ; but how very different

We; that is, we apostles and preachers of the gospel.

—This seems to be set in opposition to those superstitious Christians, who used baptism *for the dead*. The *standing in jeopardy* of such

How good is it, frequently to look forward on the life to come, in order to excite and animate ourselves to the combat! Though we have not always brutish men to deal with, nor persecutors to torment and kill us; yet we carry about, in

different are the conclusions drawn from thence, by the one and the other! But, while the world says, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*; why say, not we, Let us watch and pray, fast and repent, since we have perhaps but one day more to live?

33. *Be not deceived: Evil communications corrupt good manners.*

Many have deceived themselves, and perished by presuming on length of life: Some have been terrified with the thoughts of its shortness, and the dread of an hasty death; but such a fear, though perhaps excessive, is far safer than a presumptuous confidence.—The civilities of the world are also deceitful, and its *evil communications* more dangerous to faith, or *good manners*, than its frowns or ill-will.

34. *Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.*

He that believes there is no other life than the present, hath no belief in God, nor even the *knowledge* of him: He that believes another life, and yet continues in sin, is in a dead sleep; and except he be roused from his lethargy, and *awakened to righteousness*, in this life; his awaking from the grave, will be to *shame* and everlasting confusion in the next.

35. *But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?*

Human understanding is fond of curiosities, and would fain comprehend mysteries which are above its reach: instead of submitting to truths which are plainly delivered, they are still inquiring *how* those things can be.—This is a dangerous snare of the Devil; he puts us upon the explication of mysteries, that by questions concerning the manner of them, he may destroy the belief of the mysteries themselves.—A right faith relies upon God for the manner, as well as the reality of

of them. The difficulty lies not in believing what God has revealed; but in believing, on his authority, what we can neither conceive nor explain.

36. *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.* Nature is the handmaid and servant of grace; and philosophy, rightly understood, prepares the way to faith: But to study nature, without regarding the Creator, is no better than folly. True wisdom consists in contemplating the Creator in his works. The continual changes of decay and renovations, which we behold in the operations of nature, are a daily lesson of our own mortality and resurrection.

37. *And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain.* But carnal men cannot be persuaded, that glory can spring from humiliation, life from death, and eternal joy from a transitory sorrow. But the apostle proves the truth of this by a familiar instance in the works of nature, by the known effect of *corn* sown in the ground; there dying, and then coming up again in a beautiful and more glorious form: He demonstrates hereby, the possibility of that extraordinary change, which is to be at our resurrection. If God (who is the author both of natural and spiritual powers) can, as he visibly doth, raise the grain out of the earth, which has been sown, and for a time lies buried there, and give it a new (and yet the same) body; why should it be thought less credible, that he will also raise the bodies of men from their graves?

38. *But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.*

39. *All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another*

As the *flesh* of all living creatures, beasts, and birds, as well as of men, is still *flesh*, differing rather in kind, than

flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

40. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

41. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.

42. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption:

43. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power:

44. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickning spirit.

foul has wrought in the body, during the state of mortality, the Holy Spirit will perfect in both at the resurrection^d: Then will come to pass, what is

than in substance; and as the glory of the sun, moon, and stars, is still glory, and differs only in degree; so also, and after the same manner, is the resurrection of the dead. The body of man, when raised again at the resurrection, will be the very same body, the same flesh; but so freed from all principles of decay and corruption; so purified and refined, as from natural to become spiritual; so glorified as to become most luminous and bright, like the sun, the moon, the stars, and heavenly bodies: With this only difference, that as the brightness of the sun exceedeth that of the moon and stars; and as one star outshineth another in glory; so likewise will it be at the resurrection; the only difference will be in the degrees of glory and happiness, which one saint will be vested with above another, according to their degrees of virtue and holiness, which they attain to in life.—What virtues the

^d See Macarius.

written, and taught us in the Scriptures, that, as we received our animal life from the *first Adam*, we shall receive a spiritual and immortal life from the second. For this reason we renounce the first *Adam*, the principle of our perishing life, and are united to Christ the last *Adam*, who is the source and principle of immortality through the Spirit.—The union commences in baptism, and will be consummated in our resurrection.

46. *Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.*

47. *The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.*

48. *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.*

49. *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

God is the author both of nature and grace; but although grace be the more excellent of the two, yet the order of God is (and he is the God of order) that nature should precede grace; and that that should not be first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward, that which is spiritual.

His rule, in forming the intellectual world, is the same he observed in creating the material; he brought substance out of non-existence, and light out of darkness: And happy for man, as well as just and glorious for God, that this order is

observed. What could man, formed originally out of the earth (and of the earth earthy), expect, but to fall to the earth again, if left to himself?—To raise him from his fall, the very Son of God descended from heaven in the form of man: He now raises the mind from earthly to heavenly things; hereafter he will raise the body also from the earth itself, by a glorious resurrection.—Then, they who now are earthy, like their first parent *Adam*, shall put on the

image and likeness of him who is heavenly.—Let us, who have too long followed the pattern of the earthly and fallen *Adam*, from henceforth aspire after, and more earnestly desire to bear the image of the *heavenly man*.

50. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

spect to the manner of the human body subsisting in life and vigour, after its rising from the dead.—He affirms, this will not be after the manner as we now subsist in our present carnal state, but in a way purely spiritual; for flesh and blood, saith he, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and why? Even because corruption, which flesh and blood are naturally subject to, *cannot inherit incorruption*.—Where no sin is, there can be no corruption; where no corruption is, there can be no death; and where there is no death, there must needs be immortality and eternal life.—This incorruptible, this immortal state, is heaven.

51. *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*

52. *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound), and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

53. *For this corruptible must put on incorruption,*

The apostle having replied to the objection concerning the *manner* of the resurrection, he here gives a solution to a further difficulty; which a natural philosopher might raise, with re-

Death is certain; a resurrection from death is no less certain; but with a different, and at present uncertain event; some rising to eternal life, others to eternal damnation. As to the *mystery* the apostle here mentions, it relates to those who shall happen to be alive at the last day. They indeed will not die, as others have done, and be raised from their

and this mortal must put on immortality.

54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, *Death is swallowed up in victory.*

Christ's victory over death: So that neither good nor bad men shall ever die any more: Their state in happiness or misery, according to what they have done in the flesh, will be an eternal state of glory and joy; or of shame and torment.

55. *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

56. *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

their graves, but they will all be changed, and that, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when the trumpet sounds to judgment. Their whole body will, in an instant, be changed, and become incorruptible; no more be subject to mortality or corruption; death will then, as it were, be swallowed up by

Well may the pious Christian then triumph; and, instead of trembling at the final dissolution of the world, exult with acclamations of joy, as after the winning of a complete victory, and say, *O death, where is thy sting?*

Where is that sting of the old serpent, which, in Adam, gave all mankind their death-wound?—O grave, which so long detainedst us as slaves and captives confined in a prison, and that too, through sentence of the law which once passed on all men, *Where is now thy victory?*—Hence we see, that sin is more hateful, and more to be dreaded, than death: Death has no sting but what sin has given it, and sin has no strength but what it derives from the law: Were there no law, there would be no transgression*.—The resurrection puts a final end to all temporal death; but nothing can destroy sin, or prevent the penalty

* Rom. iv. 15.

of it, but a timely repentance, and keeping the divine law: Nothing can disarm the *law* of its *strength*, and condemning power, but repentance and faith in Christ.

57. *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

It is just, O my God, to give thee *thanks* and praise on this account, and ultimately to refer to thee the whole glory of this victory, since it is the sole gift of thy grace *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, that we shall at last conquer death; but much more, that we are enabled to conquer sin.

58. *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

But the victory over sin is never complete in this life, it being a state of incessant warfare against our spiritual enemies.—There is daily occasion to fight, and continually to be on our guard; that so, how infirm soever our strength may be, as to gaining an entire conquest, we may at least keep our ground, be *stedfast* and *unmoveable*, neither deserting our profession, nor wavering in the faith.—For encouragement of such perseverance, and much more of our *abounding in the work of the Lord*, we are assured, that neither our constancy, nor our *labour* and *pains*, shall be *in vain*:—Our sincere endeavours, as well as real success, shall meet with an ample recompence of reward.

A pious *French* writer having, in his moral reflections on the New Testament, given us a most useful comment on this chapter, 'tis hoped the reader will excuse the liberty taken, of presenting him with some of the same thoughts in an *English* dress.

Ver. 7. This is the only place in all the New Testament, where Christ's appearing to St. *James* is mentioned. But Dr. *Grabe* informs us, that *Sedulius*, an author of the fifth century, in his comment

ment on this passage, tells us it is found in a book called the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*; and that the story of St. *James's* vow to eat no bread till he had seen Christ, and Christ's appearing and bidding him to eat his bread, is also recorded there.—This relation we have also in Mr. *Nelson* * in his account of St. *James's* festival, on the first of *May*. And it is to be noted, that this is not *James* the apostle, but *James* who is called *The Less*, and brother of our Lord, who was surnamed *The Just*, and was the first bishop of *Jerusalem*.

* See it also in *Jerom, Lib. de Script. Eceles. in Jacobo*.

END of VOL. II.



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